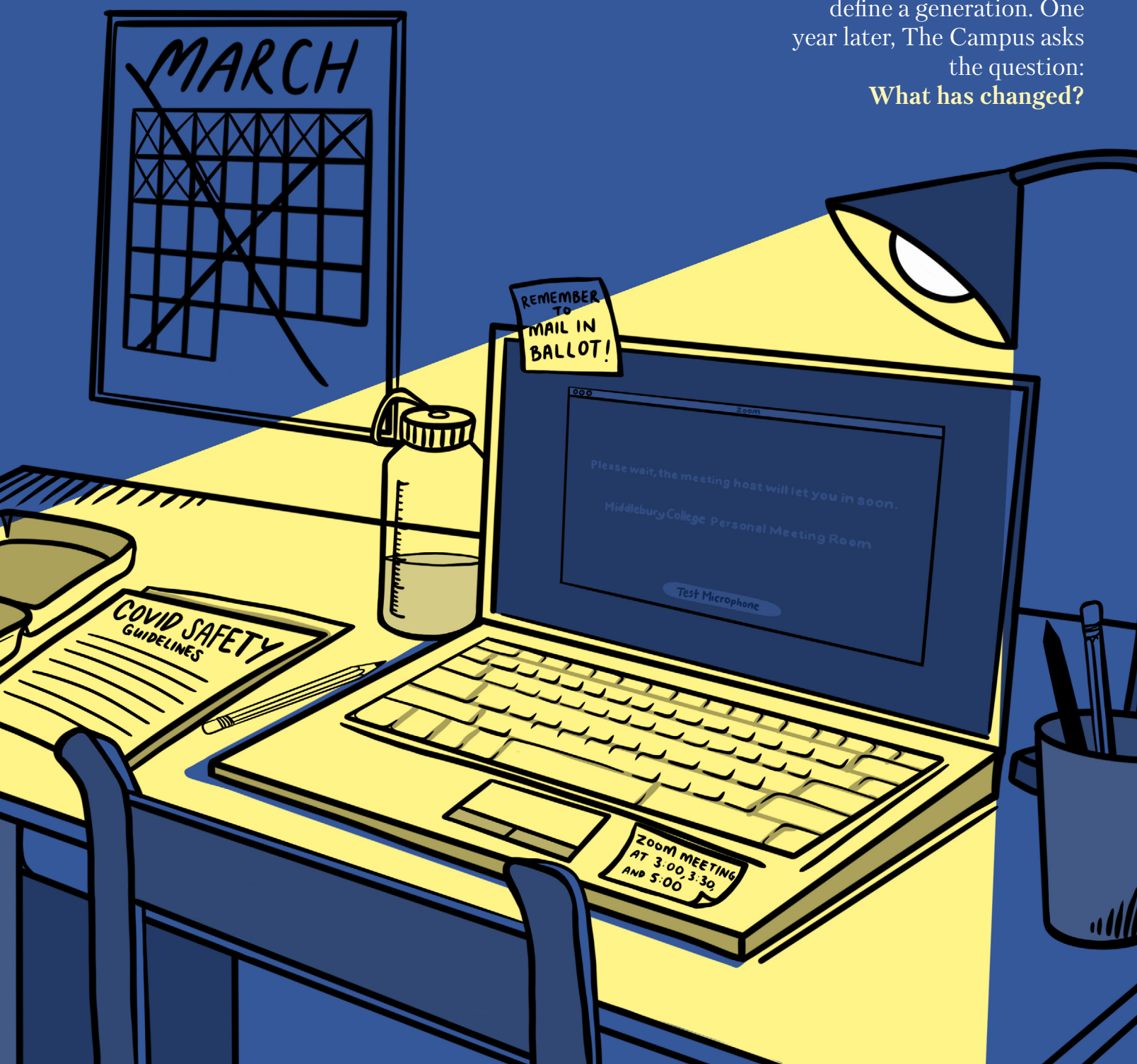


# The Middlebury Campus

## A YEAR IN

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A year ago today,  
Middlebury students got  
a piece of news that would  
define a generation. One  
year later, The Campus asks  
the question:  
**What has changed?**







## A YEAR IN

On March 10, 2020, Middlebury students received a piece of news that would change their lives forever: the Covid-19 pandemic, at the time still a hypothetical threat to many, posed too great of a risk to keep students at school. The campus would be evacuated in five days.

On March 10, 2021, The Middlebury Campus is reflecting on those 365 days through articles, art, essays and stories.

Treat this magazine as a time capsule — and as a commemoration — of a moment unlike any we've lived through before.

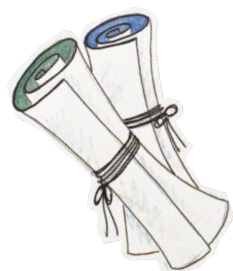


## A YEAR IN **PIECES**

11

Timelines. Drawings. Memories. Belongings. Communities. Jokes. Songs. Homes. Books. Movies. Sports. Charts. Data. Foods. Bodies. Shows. Dance. Celebrations.

These are the pieces that make up a school and a community. We've distilled them into 40 pages.



## A YEAR IN BEING **APART TOGETHER**



90

In order to make sense of the ever-changing world around us this past year, so many of us turned to the page. We wrote to make sense of the most uncertain and turbulent year of our collective lives, to bring important ideas and feelings out of our heads and into the world. We wrote to bring change, and to find peace.

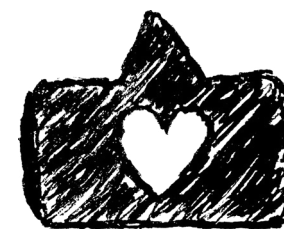
Apart Together is a collection of 20 essays, op-eds, stories and reflections from and about the pandemic, plus short anecdotes, art and more — all documenting what it means to find a way to be together, even (and especially) when we're apart.



## FEATURES

52

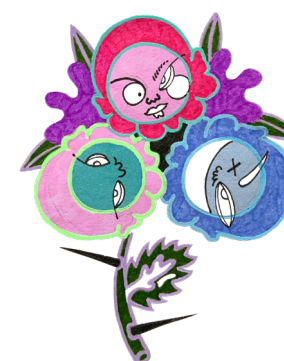
**THE LAST FIVE DAYS**  
How did students spend their sudden final moments at Middlebury?



58

**XO**  
Reflections on love, relationships and intentional connections at Middlebury

A YEAR IN LOVE



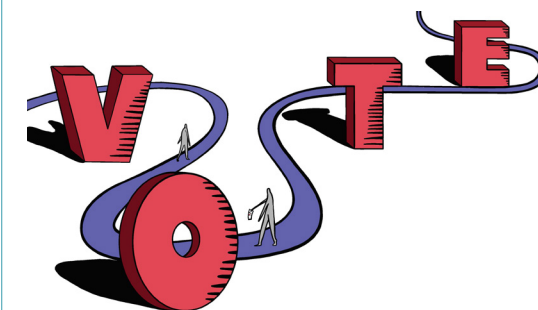
64

**SAME STORM, DIFFERENT BOATS**  
The pandemic showed us the way that inequalities affect our lives and the lives of those around us

A YEAR IN REALIZATIONS

70

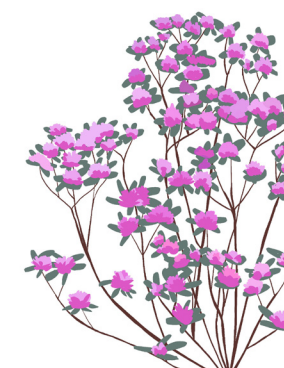
**BLACK LIVES MATTER AND RACIAL JUSTICE**  
Stories of protest and progress



76

**ELECTION 2020**  
Before, during and after the consequential election of Joe Biden

A YEAR IN POLITICS



82

**UPROOTED**  
Since departing from campus last March, one thing has remained constant: our beloved campus itself

A YEAR IN TREES





OWEN MASON-HILL



MAX PADILLA



RILEY BOARD



CONSTANCE GOODING



DALEELAH SALEH



TONY SJODIN



SARAH FAGAN



CHERYL ENGMANN



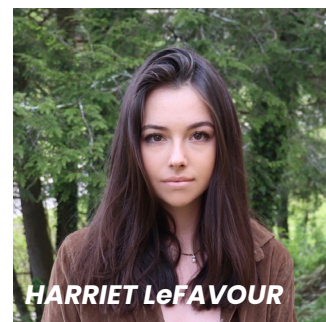
EMMANUEL TAMRAT



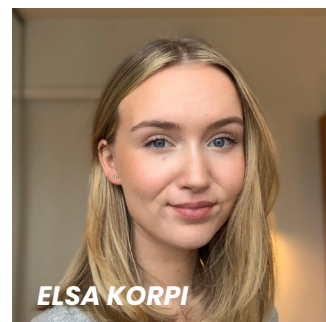
SOPHIA  
McDERMOTT-HUGHES



EMILY BALLOU



HARRIET LeFAVOUR



ELSA KORPI



ABIGAIL CHANG



BRINLEA LA BARGE



BOCHU DING

## OUR TEAM

## A YEAR IN

### Magazine Editor

Riley Board '22

### Campus Editor in Chief

Bochu Ding '21

### Executive Editors

Bochu Ding '21

Harriet LeFavour '21

Riley Board '22

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Cheryl Engmann '22

Sarah Fagan '22

Brinlea La Barge '23.5

Sophia McDermott-Hughes '23

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Abbie Chang '23

Constance Gooding '23

Elsa Korpi '22

Daleelah Saleh '23

Tony Sjodin '23

Emmanuel Tamrat '22

### 'Apart Together' Editors

Owen Mason-Hill '22\*

Max Padilla '22

### Buisness Manager

Shaye Anis '21

\*section director

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

My life has involved a lot less paper in the last year. I bet that's true for most us: online classes mean an end to handouts, worksheets and hard copies of essays. Working remotely means forms emailed or Dropboxed, not printed. But for me, the biggest change has been the absence of newspapers.

The Campus has not produced a print publication in a year. While that time has both flown by and dragged along, the absence of those steady, weekly paper copies of our newspaper has created a notable emptiness for us at The Campus (and, we hope, for the rest of those who reside and work on our campus).

What we have instead for you is this. A magazine, unprecedented in modern Campus history, that brings you 120 pages about the most complicated, challenging and unusual 365 days that we have lived through. From the day we learned that we would be (boxing, labeling and) leaving this school early, through 12 months of online classes, quarantines, social distancing, isolation, loss, love, discovery and more than I could ever list, we've been reporting, and paying attention.

This magazine would simply not have been possible without the efforts of a whole team of editors who devoted

so much time to create something beautiful and important (you can find their names to the left) and a group of extremely talented contributors (you can find their names below).

I want to specifically thank Matt Jennings and Paul Dahm of Middlebury Magazine, who helped solidify this magazine from a vague idea into the copy you hold in your hands now, and who entertained all of my silliest early-stage questions. I also want to thank The Campus leaders of the previous year, including Sabine Poux and James Finn, under whose leadership much of the content in this magazine was conceived and produced.

And finally, I of course want to thank Bochu Ding and Harriet LeFavour, the Campus leaders I admire so much and have the pleasure of working with every single week on the regular newspaper — it has been an exceptional pleasure to create this magazine with you, too.

So, please enjoy this brief return to paper, and all of the incredible work that went into its pages. This magazine is about you, it's about all of us, and what we've lived through in a year.

*Riley Board*  
RILEY BOARD  
MAGAZINE EDITOR

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A PUBLICATION OF  
The Middlebury Campus



# THE VIEW FROM HERE

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Here we are, a year in. A lot has changed in the past year and it seems like we've almost achieved a certain milestone. For us, it's been a time to reflect. It's been a time to make sense of the chaos, turmoil and loss that we've experienced in the past 365 days and to look ahead. Our staff has been tossing around these thoughts in editorial meetings for months, never quite fitting them together. We've written about the difficulty of being a first-year in a Covid-19 world, about students struggling to follow Covid-19 protocols, about busyness culture, and about a remote J-term; clearly it's been on our minds. In trying to make sense of this turbulent year, we've had to consider all that has been gained and all that has been lost.

It's been a full year since Middlebury students received the email telling us that we'd all be sent home, away from the college and away from each other. We have experienced loss. Personal loss of our friends and our family passing away. Social loss of our ability to see and be around one another. Many of us have lost our attachment to the college's campus, unable to take part in the "living learning" environment that the college prides itself on. Back in February 2020, before the pandemic had reached Vermont, a Chinese international student was barred from entering Middlebury as a Feb because missing the first two weeks of the semester on campus was too great a detriment to the "living learning" education the college offers. Now, more than a year after publishing the story, we find ourselves facing a reality that was unfathomable then.

The identity of our college has changed. We fear the loss of so much of what makes Middlebury ours. We fear the loss of the random, the spontaneity that our small campus offered: striking up conversations with professors on the walk to and from class, random encounters with friends in Atwater dining hall, midnight breakfasts and weekend trips to Burlington. We fear that students won't fly paper airplanes through BiHall or pile into Proctor for midnight churros during finals week, that no impromptu performances will take place in the Gamut room and no spring concerts will blare in Kenyon, that first years won't bond over scrappy meals on hectic MiddView trips. We fear the loss of our identity in a year of so much change.

It has been a year of change, and while Middlebury is anticipating an eventual return to normal, do we want it to be just that — a return? It would be foolhardy to act as if this year didn't happen; to forgo all the changes that have happened and return to the status quo. We have become a more empathetic, understanding Middlebury, one where professors, students and administrators have become more conscious of one another. Flexibility is no longer a rarity, but has become an essential part of

our new normal. The administration has made mental health services less taboo by creating better access to counseling, and students are, in turn, placing greater emphasis on their own mental well-being. We have cared for each other through the mutual aid forms, and the college has prioritized staff wage continuity. We have strengthened our community even in our fractalized state.

In this year of reflection and introspection, where students have had an abundance of time to themselves, much of the way we view the college has shifted. Maybe it's for the better. Students are no longer moving forward on the "should be" conveyor belt but are instead taking a more individualized approach to Middlebury. We can envision a Middlebury where students prioritize their wants and needs over what is perceived to be "right." We have become more deliberate in our friendships and in our gatherings, taking time to consider who we interact with and how it impacts our life. We have decentralized Middlebury's party scene, making smaller, more intentional gatherings. Middlebury has become a place of flux, where social and academic life is molded and shaped to support the students who make it up.

As our first year of Covid-19 college nears an end, we should take the time to consider what we've lost and what we've gained. Consider whether the changes to our college's culture have been for the better. Consider how certain members of our community have historically been excluded. Consider whether the togetherness we felt over a year ago was actually as together as we remember, or whether we may have been farther apart than we thought.

We should not forget the empathy this year has taught us, nor should we forget to care for ourselves just as we care for others. We should continue to strip the taboo from mental health, from taking a semester off, from needing flexibility. We should continue to be a more mindful and intentional Middlebury. But while we welcome these changes that this year has brought us, we should also remember all that we have lost and all that we wish to bring back.

We welcome a return Middlebury's spontaneity, and we hope to arrive back soon to a campus where we can walk into Proctor dining hall alone and find a group of friends to sit with, where we can bump into a professor on a walk and strike up a chat, where we can once again feel like a close knit community. But let us not forget the lessons of this year as we make our way through the next one.

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*Editor's Note: This editorial represents the opinions of The Campus magazine editorial board.*







**A YEAR  
IN PIECES**



# CONTENTS

A YEAR IN HEADLINES	13
THE YEAR'S 10 MOST-READ CAMPUS STORIES	16
FALL COVID-19 STATISTICS FROM TESTING TO DISCIPLINE	17
FROM SPRING TO FALL, CAMPUS SURVEYS TELL OF STUDENT STRUGGLE	18
THE THINGS WE LEFT BEHIND	20
COMMUNITY-BUILDING AMID CORONAVIRUS CANCELLATIONS	22
THE ESSENTIAL WORKERS AMONG US	24
MIDD KIDS ON THE FRONTLINES	24
MEM(E)ORIES: REMEMBERING THE YEAR IN MEMES	26
MEMES, TWEETS AND THE COMMUNITIES IN BETWEEN	29
A NEW AGE OF ADMISSIONS	30
THE OFF-CAMPUS PROJECT: ONE YEAR LATER	32
WHAT OUR EDITORS READ AND WATCHED DURING QUARANTINE	34
WHICH WAY HOME?	36
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS NAVIGATE THE PANDEMIC WORLD	36
OUR BODIES IN QUARANTINE	38
A COLLECTION OF SHORT VIGNETTES	38
'MORE THAN JUST FOOD'	40
TRACING THE HISTORY OF THE KNOLL	40
THROWN A CURVEBALL	42
THE SEASON OF COVID-SAFE SPORTS	42
THE SHOW GOES ON	44
FALL ARTS AND PERFORMANCES	44
FIRST YEARS BREAK THE ICE	46
INCOMING STUDENTS BOND OVER ZOOM MARATHONS	46
IN VOGUE	47
NEW STUDENT MAGAZINES CREATE SPACE FOR EXPRESSION	47
BEHIND THE BELLS	48
CARILLONNEUR GEORGE MATTHEW JR. PLAYS FOR PASSION AND PROTEST	48
'SENIOR WEEK IN MARCH'	50
CLASSES OF 2019.75 AND 2020.5 GRADUATE IN A NEW AGE	50

# A YEAR IN HEADLINES

<p><b>MARCH 10</b></p> <p>Campus waits for news on coronavirus following professor's email</p> <p>College confirms suspension of on-campus classes in response to coronavirus concerns</p>	<p><b>MARCH 20</b></p> <p>Local business takes hit from mandated closures and quarantined public</p>	<p><b>APRIL 2</b></p> <p>Joining forces with town, Middlebury repurposes resources and offers support</p> <p>With no end to Covid in sight, college will finish semester remotely</p>
<p><b>MARCH 15</b></p> <p>Vandalism spikes as students prepare to leave campus</p>	<p><b>MARCH 23</b></p> <p>Midd students scramble to get home as Covid-19 shuts down programs abroad</p>	<p><b>APRIL 17</b></p> <p>Faculty reject universal credit/no credit grading model, vote 'yes' on opt-in system</p>



<p><b>MARCH 18</b></p> <p>Senior week in March: Covid-19 truncates seniors' final semester</p> <p>Porter Hospital confirms Addison County's first case of Covid-19</p>	<p><b>MARCH 28</b></p> <p>Grading takes center stage as students prepare for unprecedented shift to online classes</p>	<p><b>APRIL 9</b></p> <p>Nonprofits house homeless in Middlebury hotels; dining service delivers meals</p> <p>Admission office markets Midd in a year roiled by economic downturn, public health crisis</p>
<p><b>MARCH 11</b></p> <p>BevCo sees long lines, drastic sales increase after classes suspended</p>	<p><b>MARCH 22</b></p> <p>The college's 'first priority': continuing staff wages</p>	



<p><b>MAY 29</b></p> <p>Students return to Middlebury surrounding senior week, sparking safety concerns</p>	<p><b>JUNE 7</b></p> <p>‘Injustice doesn’t have a schedule:’ students join protests across the country</p>	<p><b>JUNE 22</b></p> <p>Middlebury announces on-campus instruction for the fall</p>	<p><b>JULY 27</b></p> <p>Over half of fall courses to be offered completely remotely, campus analysis finds</p>	<p><b>AUGUST 20</b></p> <p>Businesses report quarantine violations as first round of students return</p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER 10</b></p> <p>Staff, cautiously optimistic, face increased workload as students return</p> <p>Middlebury holds breath as Covid case number sits at two</p> <p>Fall coaches adjust to a season without competitive play</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER 1</b></p> <p>Students protest grand jury verdict for officers who killed Breonna Taylor</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER 19</b></p> <p>Campus returns to modified Phase One as Vermont Covid-19 cases surge</p> <p>Students gear up for the first remote winter term</p>	<p><b>JANURARY 12</b></p> <p>College revokes Giuliani’s honorary degree</p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY 4</b></p> <p>Douglass Mackey ’11, far-right troll, arrested for 2016 election interference</p>
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<b>MAY 7</b>  Freeze puts hiring on pause, through many positions were already filled	<b>JUNE 4</b>  From cluttered homes to an uncertain fall, survey lays bare students' pandemic struggles	<b>JULY 1</b>  'Sent without permission: a farewell from an unwelcome hire': departing visiting professor alleges incidents of racism	<b>AUGUST 10</b>  Following entry testing, Middlebury to test 750 people per week for Covid-19 this fall	<b>SEPTEMBER 22</b>  College bars 22 students from campus for Covid-19 policy violations	<b>SEPTEMBER 26</b>  Student reports being the target of a racial slur on campus	<b>NOVEMBER 12</b>  Spring modalities: proportion of in-person classes to double this spring  Middlebury residents, students mobilize in support of counting every vote  Two students test positive for Covid-19, 17 quarantined	<b>DECEMBER 3</b>  After last-minute cancellation, Febs swap Snow Bowl graduation for stadium celebration	<b>JANUARY 29</b>  Applications up 30% to nearly 12,000 in historic surge
	<b>JUNE 15</b>  Middlebury schools abroad announces fall program cancellations			<b>OCTOBER 8</b>  Students navigate mail-in voting ahead of contentious election  Middlebury to hold delayed on-campus spring semester, remote J-Term				

PHOTOS BY BENJY RENTON, VAN BARTH, JESS COHEN & ANGELINA GOMES



# IN RETROSPECT: THE TOP 10 MOST-READ STORIES IN 2020

1.

'Sent Without Permission: A Farewell from an Unwelcome Hire': Departing professor alleges incidents of racism

By Lily Laesch

7,784 views

July 1, 2020
2.

Acceptance rate sees uptick to 24% amid Covid-19 uncertainties

By Bochu Ding

6,149 views

April 2, 2020
3.

The Middlebury Off-Campus Project

By community members, consolidated by The Campus staff

5,499 views

Ongoing
4.

A response to Professor Marissel Hernández-Romero's email

By Professor Natasha Ngaiza

5,217 views

July 7, 2020
5.

College bars 22 students from campus following Covid-19 policy violations

By Amelia Pollard

4,966 views

Sept. 22, 2020
6.

Middlebury grad revealed as prominent alt-right troll

By Catherine Pollack

4,913 views

April 11, 2018
7.

Middlebury must rescind Rudy Giuliani's honorary degree

By The Campus Editorial Board

4,770 views

Jan. 10, 2021
8.

From cluttered homes to an uncertain fall, survey lays bare students' pandemic struggles

By James Finn & Benjy Renton

4,913 views

June 22, 2020
9.

BREAKING: Middlebury announces on-campus instruction for the fall

By Riley Board, Harriet LeFavour & Bochu Ding

4,585 views

June 22, 2020
10.

Faculty vote in favor of students returning in the fall

By Abigail Chang

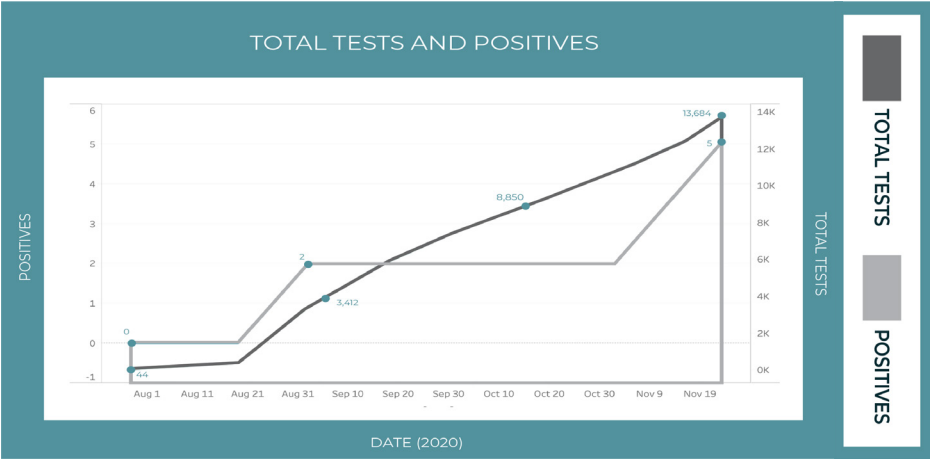
4,367 views

June 22, 2020

Read them all at [middleburycampus.com](https://middleburycampus.com)

# THE FALL SEMESTER TESTED STUDENTS IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

POSITIVES	NEGATIVES	TESTS ADMINSTERED
5	13,694	13,699



Of 13,699 Covid-19 tests administered at Middlebury in fall 2020 through the college's targeted dynamic testing plan, only five positives were detected. All infections were said to have occurred off campus, with no evidence of community spread.

Of the students living on campus in the fall, 108 were disciplined for Covid-19 protocol violations, while 29 were dismissed from campus. Twenty-two of these dismissals occurred on a single night in September.

## COVID-19 DISCIPLINE STATISTICS

DISCIPLINED	REMOVED FROM CAMPUS
108	29

DATA BY BENJY RENTON

## COLLEGE BARS 22 STUDENTS FROM CAMPUS FOR COVID-19 VIOLATIONS

AMELIA POLLARD

For some residents of the notoriously party-centric Atwater residence halls, Phase Two festivities came to a grinding halt when Public Safety officers knocked on their doors Thursday night. Officers discovered gatherings over the maximum occupancy limit of six for the spaces, and over the indoor gathering limit of 10 people. There were two gatherings of 14 and 15 students in different Atwater suites, according to students present. In the second case, several students managed to leave without incident, dodging the Public Safety officers and escaping from one of the suite's two exits before the officers demanded student IDs.

The 22 students written up by Public Safety met individually with Brian Lind, the associate dean of

conduct, on Friday morning over Zoom, according to two upperclassmen involved in the episode. He notified them that those living on campus would need to leave for violating college policy, and students living in off-campus residences would lose access to the campus and its facilities, including in-person classes. The college has been tight-lipped about the incidents and Lind did not respond to multiple emails for comment.

Since the events Thursday night, the mood in the Atwater complex has been somber. "When I went out Saturday, it was dead quiet," said Atwater resident Andrew Ng '22. "The administration definitely sent a strong message."



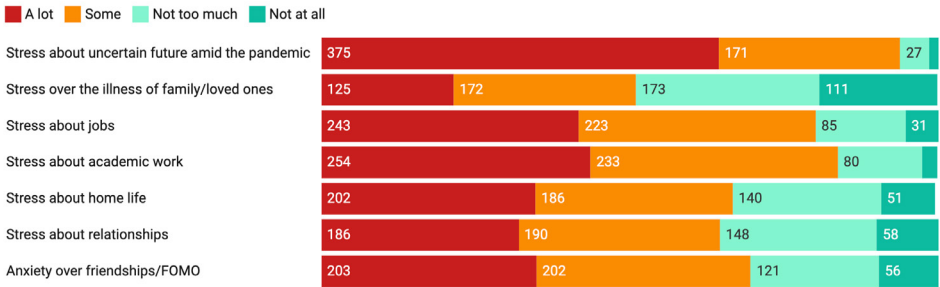
# FROM SPRING TO FALL, CAMPUS SURVEY RESULTS TELL OF STUDENT STRUGGLES

The Campus conducted a survey at the beginning of the pandemic in spring 2020 to see how students’ lives had changed. This fall, we followed up.

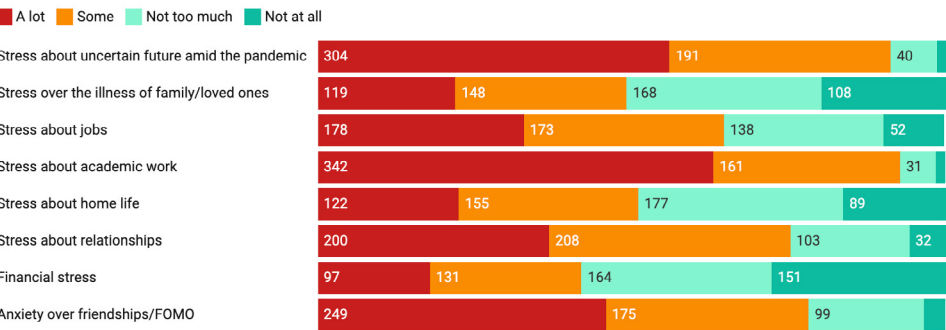
## MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES PERSISTED IN BOTH SEMESTERS

In the spring survey, 64% of students reported experiencing mental health challenges since in-person classes were suspended.

How much have the following stress factors affected your life this spring?



How much have the following stress factors affected your mental health this semester?

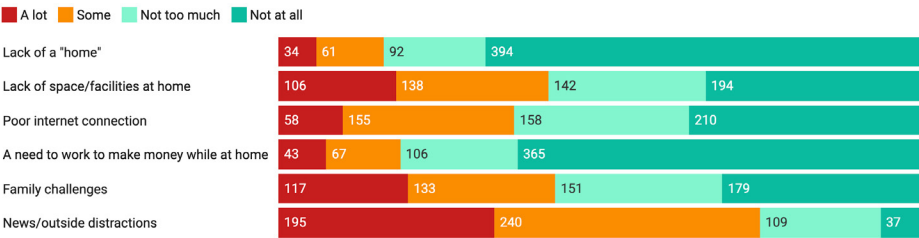


In the fall survey, 76% of students reported experiencing worse mental health than during a typical semester.

## IN SPRING, REMOTE LEARNING PRESENTED CHALLENGES AT HOME

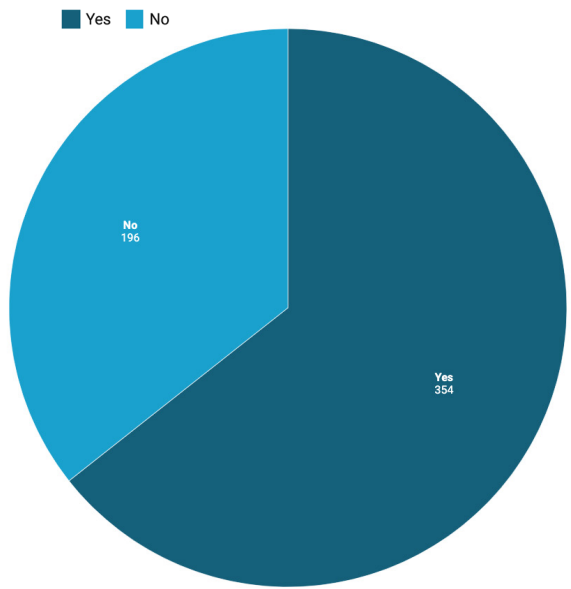
After the sudden transition to online classes in March, students struggled with homelessness, lack of space and new distractions as they worked to complete their spring courseload.

How much did the following obstacles present challenges in your distance learning experience?



## MOST STUDENTS BROKE FALL COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

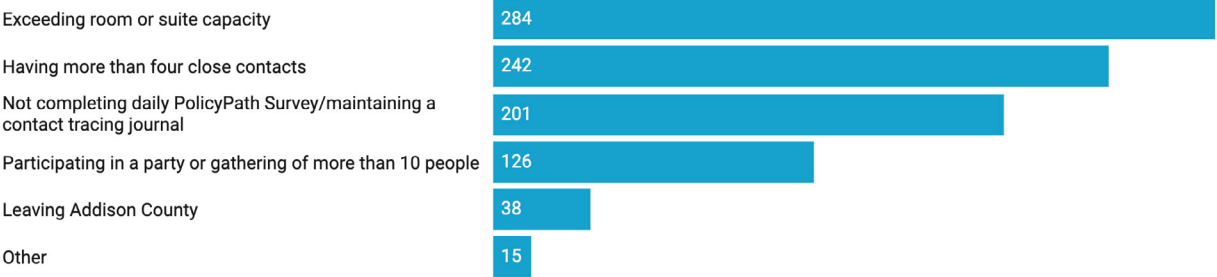
Have you broken Covid-19 health protocols this semester?



About two in every three fall respondents reported breaking campus Covid-19 protocols during the semester, with infractions ranging from not completing PolicyPath surveys to leaving Addison County.

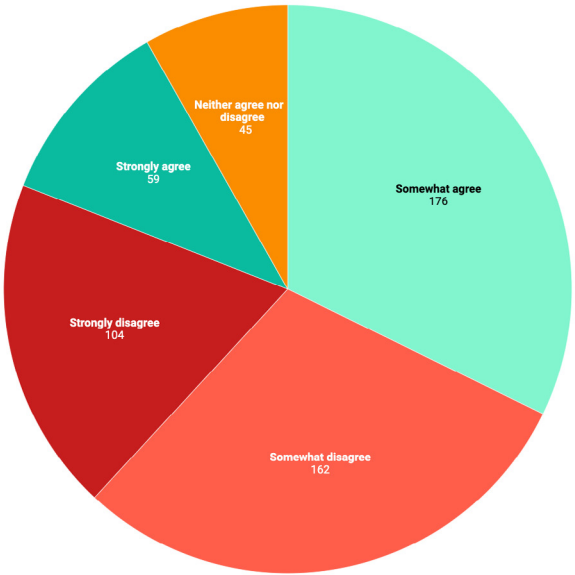
One respondent wrote that they were maskless with as many as 30 people in a house or suite every weekend. “The rules were too strict,” they said. “If I had followed them I would have become depressed.”

If so, how? Check all that apply.



## STUDENTS FOUND EVOLVING COVID-19 GUIDELINES UNCLEAR

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: Middlebury’s Covid-19 policies were clear and I did not feel confused in following the guidelines.



Nearly half of students reported finding the college’s Covid-19 guidelines unclear or confusing during the fall semester.

Many reported anxiety over unintentionally breaking rules and facing punishment or dismissal from campus.

Spring survey results



Fall survey results



To view full survey results and analysis, scan the QR codes above using your cell phone camera.

DATA BY BENJY RENTON



# THE THINGS WE LEFT BEHIND

In March, students were given three days to pack their things and get out. They had no idea when, or if, they would return. Many students left most of their belongings in their room and didn't have access to them again until as late as September. Here's what some students left behind in the mad dash to evacuate.

## COOK BOOK

I've been compiling a cook book for years and adding to it whenever I find a recipe I love. All that quarantine cooking and no recipe book. Heartbreaking.

— Harriet LeFavour '21



## CASSIE, THE SUCCULENT

"Cassie was a small succulent plant — named after her scientific classification, *crassula ovata* — that I had picked out at Ikea the week before heading to school. I couldn't find space for her to ride home in my car, so I supposed that leaving her on the desk of my Battell double was the safest option."

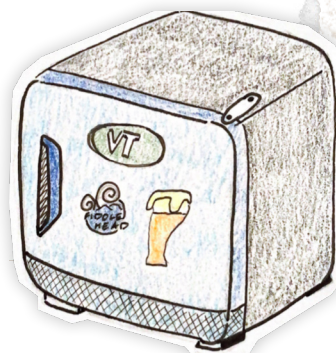
— Brinlea La Barge '23



## MINI FRIDGE

"I had this fridge all four years of Midd and had covered it in stickers of breweries I had been to with friends starting junior year. Many of the breweries we couldn't go back to, and the fridge reminds me of days with friends that don't seem like they'll ever come back."

— William Anderson '20.5



"I keep all of my first letters to and from my half sister [in a book-shaped box]. I thought that they would be safer stored in my room."

— Isabella Cady '22.5

## BOX OF LETTERS

## FRENCH HOST FAMILY

"I was in France and was forced to flee, so I never had time to say goodbye to my host family. That's something I wish I had done."

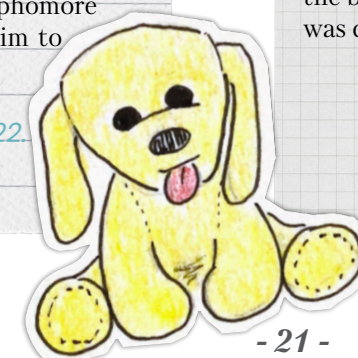
— Kaila Thomas '21



## AVOCADO, THE STUFFED ANIMAL

"He is a stuffed animal that I sleep with every night, and I had with me at school both freshman and sophomore year. I was unable to pack him to fly across the country."

— Mara Strich '22



"I had bought saffron in Morocco studying abroad and was saving it for a special occasion. It was in a tiny bag at the back of the cabinet, and I must have missed it when I was cleaning."

— Cara Levine '20

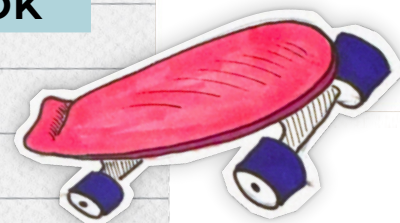
## MOROCCAN SAFFRON



## SKATEBOARD

I rode my skateboard around the halls of Allen and even BiHall during my first year at Midd. In all of my pre-lockdown ignorance, I thought I would return to it in three short weeks, so leaving it for months was one of many things I was not prepared for. I longed for it on every family quarantine walk.

— Grace McCarthy '23



"I left my wall art at Midd, thinking I would be back in three weeks, and my bedroom walls were crushingly bare for the six months I lived in my parents' house. I know it sounds like nothing, but that art constantly reminded me that I wanna be a silly, trans leftist."

— Francis Shiner '23

## POSTERS



## SUNGLASSES

"I wore these kid-sized sports sunglasses everyday on Winter Carnival weekend. They remind me of a really fun time when we got together as a community and everything was normal."

— Emily Power '23





# COMMUNITY-BUILDING AMID CORONAVIRUS CANCELLATIONS

## MUTUAL AID SPREADSHEET SHARES RESOURCES AND MEETS NEEDS DURING PANDEMIC EVACUATION.

SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES

The very day that students found out they would be evacuated from campus because of the Covid-19 pandemic, a “mutual aid spreadsheet” sprung into existence, a forum through which students, faculty, staff, community members and parents could help each other manage the logistical and emotional hurdles surrounding the college’s indefinite suspension of classes. People could post in the document to request services, resources and shoulders to lean on.

By the night of March 10, dozens of people had already extended almost 100 offers of aid in the spreadsheet, including temporary housing throughout the country, long-term storage in Vermont, local meals and rides ranging from the Burlington airport to Tennessee. Several people posted their contact information for those seeking emotional and spiritual support.

“[I HOPE PEOPLE] NOTICE IN THIS TIME OF CRISIS HOW MUCH POTENTIAL WE HAVE TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER.”

AMI FURGANG '20

“Is it your birthday while stuck on campus? I will bake you a (mini) cake!” wrote Stace Marshall, Assistant to the Vice President for College Advancement. Diana Cotter, a 79-year-old Middlebury resident, offered students space in her studio apartment, despite concerns over her own fragile health and coronavirus risk.

The mutual aid spreadsheet was inspired by concern for the students most impacted by the sudden

announcement. “We were thinking about who this might really affect, like low income students, international students, and students who don’t have homes they feel safe going to or don’t have homes to return to,” said Ami Furgang '20, one of the spreadsheet moderators. Cora Kircher '20 and Leif Taranta '20.5 were the other moderators. Taranta created the spreadsheet.

“We anticipated that, even if Middlebury did offer housing to students, people would definitely still fall through the cracks. So this is to fill up those cracks and beyond,” Furgang said. While Taranta encouraged students to share the spreadsheet widely, they asked that people use it with trust and respect and not share contact details or sensitive information revealed in people’s posts. They encouraged those with privacy concerns to reach out to those who had already posted offers, or ask the moderators to anonymously request assistance on their behalf.

The spreadsheet was organized in tabs, including food, housing and transportation. People could post either offers or requests for aid in the appropriate columns. Taranta asked that people delete their offers and requests once they are fulfilled so that the spreadsheet could remain current and easily navigable. The spreadsheet also hosted a list of Middlebury’s recent announcements and instructions relating to the coronavirus situation as well as resources the college was offering to students.

“[I hope people] notice in this time of crisis how much potential we have to support each other,” Furgang said.

“Coronavirus is a crisis, but we are going to be facing even more crises as a community as the years go on,” Taranta said. “[The mutual aid spreadsheet] is beyond trying to help our classmates and the people we care about now. It’s also trying to build those systems and practices, so, as this continues to happen, we’ll have that support network.”

*Editor’s Note: A version of this article was originally published on March 11, 2020.*



## THE SEW MUST GO ON: WITH THEATERS DARK, COSTUME CREATORS BECOME MASK MAKERS

EMILY BALLOU

The Middlebury College Theatre Department Costume Shop is accustomed to last minute alterations, so when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Vermont, employees quickly changed course from sewing costumes to sewing face masks.

Shortly after most students evacuated campus, Mark Peluso, Middlebury’s director of health services, requested the department’s costume shop sew face masks for healthcare workers at Porter Hospital; by that time, Associate Costume Director Robin Foster Cole and Costume Shop Director Carol Wood were already on it. Not long after that, the college made another mask request: this time, could the students and staff remaining on campus also be supplied two masks each? “There was no doubt we could execute this,” Wood said. According to Wood, the costume shop churns out 400–600 masks per week. To date, the mask makers have produced 3,000 masks and counting.

## NONPROFITS HOUSE HOMELESS IN MIDDLEBURY HOTELS; DINING SERVICE DELIVERS MEALS

HARRIET LeFAVOUR

The pressure to stay home to slow the spread of Covid-19 begs the question: what if you don’t have a home to stay in? In an effort to answer, local nonprofits such as the John Graham Shelter, Charter House and WomenSafe have been working together to move dozens of Addison County’s housing-insecure into vacant rooms at the Middlebury Inn, Sugar House Motel, Courtyard Marriott and Middlebury Sweets Motel.

The program’s organizers have also recognized that self-isolation necessities go beyond housing security. Middlebury College Dining has joined the effort as well, donating three fresh Proctor-concocted meals to the relocated Vermonters each day.

The Proctor Dining Hall staff, still working to prepare food for the 100-odd students remaining on campus, now package two hot meals per day from the pre-planned menu, as well as a cold breakfast for the next day. Addison County’s nonprofits plan to continue housing and feeding those in need indefinitely.

## SGA REDIRECTS UNUSED FUNDS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS, STAFF

ABIGAIL CHANG

The Student Government Association (SGA) will give \$320,000 of its reserve funds to the administration to aid community support efforts amid the Covid-19 pandemic — \$200,000 for supporting college staff members and \$100,000 for the Student Emergency Fund, according to a bill passed on March 29. The SGA is still considering various uses for the remaining \$20,000 in reserve funds.

The \$100,000 that the SGA has pledged to the Student Emergency Fund will help support extra travel, housing, food and other costs students have incurred as a result of Covid-19. The new bill designates \$150,000 for financing staff wage continuity. The other \$50,000 of the sum allocated to supporting staff has not yet been put toward a specific purpose.

SGA Treasurer Kenshin Cho '20 and SGA President Varsha Vijayakumar '20 worked to bring the bill before the student senate.



# THE ESSENTIAL WORKERS AMONG US

## MIDDKIDS ON THE FRONTLINES

SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES & SARAH MILLER

As states across the country issued stay-at-home orders last spring, essential workers carried on working and took on personal risks to keep the country functioning. Among their ranks were several Middlebury students who faced daily concerns about personal and familial health, battled exhaustion, balanced school work and struggled with their mental health. These are the experiences of a few MiddKids who worked, and continue to work, on the frontlines.



### CONCERN FOR FAMILY

For student essential workers, deciding to work was not without pause: many worried that they would become sick at work and infect their families when they returned home. Meg Haberle '22 worked at a private ambulance service in Worcester, Mass. She would immediately place all her items in a plastic storage unit, shower and wash her uniform upon returning home before interacting with the rest of her family.

Emily Klar '21 began working as an EMT in Bethel, Vermont immediately after being evacuated from Middlebury in March. Her mother, a registered nurse at a local hospital, worried for her and her daughter's safety given that their jobs could potentially put them in contact with Covid-19 patients. She nearly quit her own job and urged her daughter to stop working as well. "I'm deciding to continue working on the frontlines [because] I think I am relatively healthy, and I want to give back to my community now that they need me the most," Klar recalled telling her mother.

### BATTLING FRONTLINE FATIGUE

While the pace of life has slackened for many during the pandemic, frontline workers have felt opposite effects. The private ambulance company where Haberle worked frequently contracts with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). When FEMA asked the company for volunteers to deploy to New York City during the height of the pandemic there, Haberle stepped up. "I felt like I had a calling to go to New York City," she said. "I have the skills, the means, the opportunity. I couldn't reconcile not going."

She worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week with only one day off during the three weeks she was there. Dressed from head to toe in PPE, her plastic hospital gown became a sauna in the sweltering July heat as she moved people and bodies in and out of her truck. Haberle recalled returning to the hotel each night and crawling into bed, utterly spent, only to start all over again in the morning.

Haberle missed the end of the school year — including finals — to volunteer. In rare moments of peace, she would watch recorded lectures and scribble down biochemistry notes on the truck's dashboard. She recalls staking out parks to wander through when she called her mom, who tried — and failed — to hide her concern for her daughter.



### A TOLL ON MENTAL HEALTH

Throughout the spring and summer, first responders reported high rates of burnout. But Em Luber '22, who worked as an EMT in Middlebury and Fairhaven and at a pop-up Covid-19 testing clinic, found that, in some ways, working during the pandemic helped her mental health. "I don't do well when I'm at home, and I also don't do well when I'm not busy and when I'm not being social," Luber said.

Klar saw work as an escape from a house where she had only her family and her schoolwork for company. Working, she said, provided her with the opportunity to "feel like I was doing something."



### HAZARDOUS WORKING CONDITIONS

Alex Myers '23 worked as a cashier at a craft store over the summer in Chatham, Mass, where she felt unsafe and uncomfortable working under conditions that placed her at risk for contracting Covid-19. Her boss did not believe in the effectiveness of masks nor the seriousness of the pandemic. He refused to wear a mask or require patrons to wear masks and follow social distancing requirements mandated by state law.

Myers felt that her employer placed her health and safety at risk, all while paying her minimum wage. Although she could not convince her boss to implement safety protocols, he did acquiesce to her demand for hazard pay. Meanwhile, Myers tried to enforce state health requirements within the store, repeatedly reminding patrons to wear their masks or telling them to wait outside when the store became crowded.

Though she never felt that anyone actively endangered her life, she described several "close calls" where gentle reminders of state guidelines ended in "screaming matches" with patrons. Myers did her best to remain patient and "kill them with kindness," but the frequent confrontations wore her down. "The hardest part of the job was making sure people were aware that we are in a pandemic," Myers said.



### PUBLIC PRAISE ONLY GOES SO FAR

Throughout the early months of the pandemic, politicians and the media repeatedly praised frontline workers for the essential role they were playing in keeping the country functioning. Some of these workers, however, found the praise hollow and frustrating in the face of their daily reality.

Will Anderson '20.5 spent the summer working at his local Whole Foods in Hingham, Mass. He described "waking up everyday to a cognitive dissonance." While the news praised essential workers like him, he faced verbal attacks from customers refusing to follow the Covid-19 safety protocols. "The attacks felt more real than messages of 'Thank you essential workers,'" he said.



### FINDING A PANDEMIC WORK-SCHOOL BALANCE

Klar continued to work at three different ambulance services in Vermont as she studied remotely in the fall semester. After working 60 to 100 hours a week during the summer, she has cut back to 36 hours, which still amounts to nearly a full time job.

Klar said she prefers working to school. Her job helps lessen and put into perspective her anxieties about classes. While the demands of her classwork can feel all-consuming, no one is dying in her biology class.

For Anderson, returning to Middlebury brought him "a feeling of closure." He relished in the opportunities to see old friends and enjoy his last semester on campus. Instead of worrying about contracting Covid-19 at work and bringing it home to his family, he now frets that "the bees will get diabetes, and the squirrels will get high cholesterol."



# MARCH

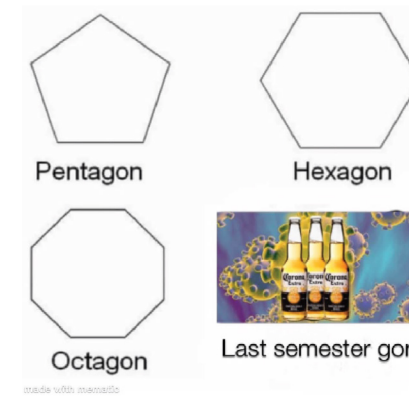
## MEM(E)ORIES

### REMEMBERING THE YEAR IN MEMES

SOURCED FROM THE MIDDLEBURY MEMES FOR CRUNCHY TEENS FACEBOOK GROUP,  
MODERATED BY HENRY CRONIC, TORRE DAVY, CHARLOTTE GRAY & NIKI KOWSAR



TORRE DAVY



JEREMY JOHNSON

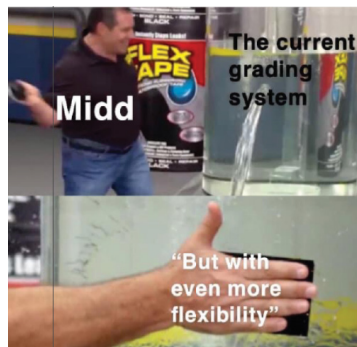
Regs to febs: hey you can walk with us at graduation



BEN BARRETT

# APRIL

Middlebury students and administration debated grading policies for the spring semester, eventually electing an opt-in credit/no-credit system. In the same month, Residential Life indicated their plans to accomodate more students on campus in fall.



NIKI KOWSAR



DREW AN-PHAM

# MAY

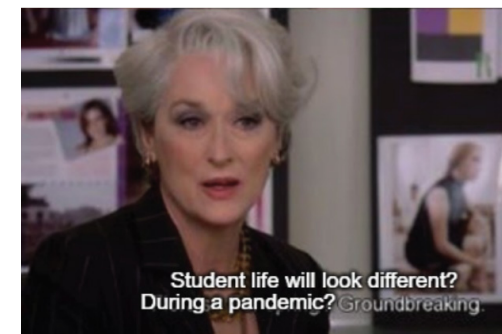
The Class of 2020 attended an online graduation from home. Some students returned to Middlebury during the pandemic, ignoring Covid-19 concerns to celebrate their undergraduate years.



DAN LEVESQUE

# JUNE

When the school released its plans for the upcoming fall 2020 semester, some students considered deferring or going remote. Also in June, professor Marissel Hernández-Romero detailed her experiences with racism on campus in an email that was quickly deleted from school servers by the administration.



ANONYMOUS



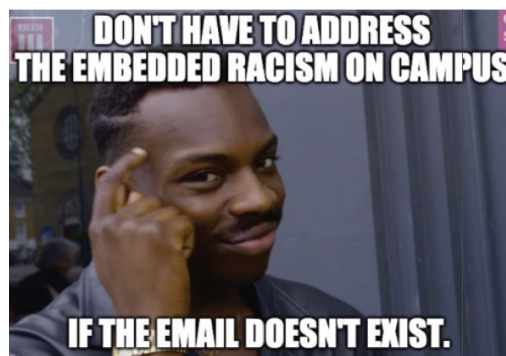
NATE MOLL



CHARICE LAWRENCE

# JULY

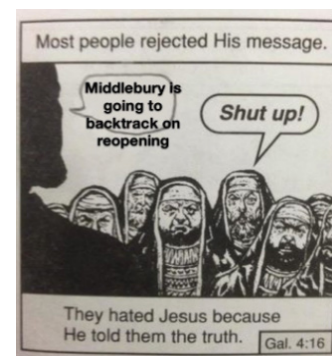
In July, students looked to residential life directors for help with housing and received further guidelines for fall move-in.



HIRA ZEESHAN



DAN LEVESQUE



MENDEL BALJON

# AUGUST

Students and faculty returned to a changed campus in late August. During the first few weeks, students were contained to campus, accepting meals (and bagels, trail mix and water bottles) at their doors during room quarantine.



ISABELLE DAVIS



DAN LEVESQUE



JUSTIN COOPER



## SEPTEMBER

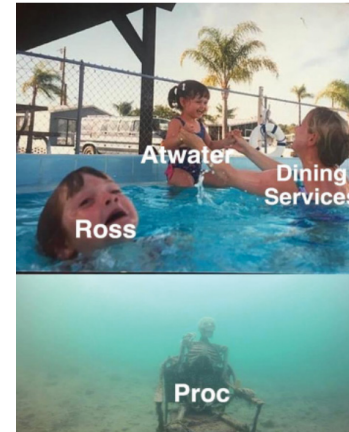
Cows at the Knoll: \*exist\*  
Every MiddKid in existence:



JUSTIN COOPER



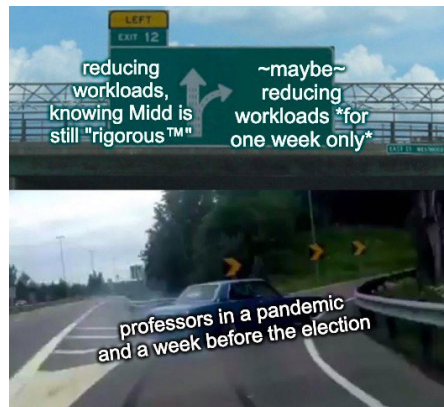
ERIC KAPNER



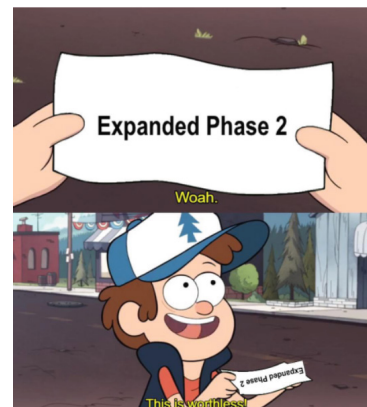
JUSTIN COOPER

## OCTOBER

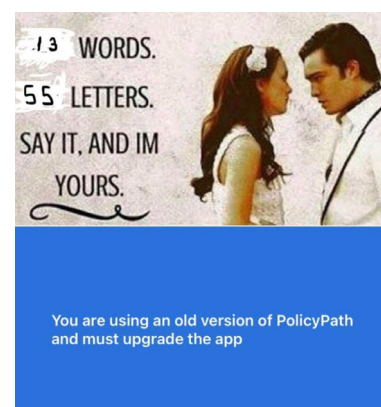
In October, Midd moved into an “expanded Phase Two” of the reopening plan, which meant a gradual easing of Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines such as room capacities and open study spaces.



KEITH CHATINOVER



LIAM HAHN



ISAAC MAYS-SMITH

## NOVEMBER

The campus prepared for the 2020 presidential election on Nov. 3. Later that month, Addison County saw an increase in Covid-19 cases, prompting the school to contain students to a campus quarantine. Students earned a chocolate bar as a token for their cooperation throughout the semester.



IGOR TODOROVIC



JUSTIN COOPER



EDYTH MOLDOW

## LOGGED OFF

### A COMMENTARY ON MIDDLEBURY'S MEMES, TWEETS AND THE COMMUNITIES IN BETWEEN

JAKE GAUGHAN

Besides Panopto lectures and PolicyPath surveys, one of the most drastic changes to Middlebury College life in the pandemic has been the digitization of Middlebury's social scene and community spaces. For students, many of these online spaces are familiar: the all-powerful meme page, topical Twitter threads and specialty Instagram accounts. Now, they also fill the interpersonal void created by remote schooling. Important and imperfect, online communities are now sometimes all we have — and just like in-person communities, they require thoughtful reconsideration and momentum toward inclusivity.

Created in the shadow of Charles Murray's 2017 visit, the Facebook meme page “Middlebury Memes for Crunchy Teens” now boasts over 3500 members — larger than Middlebury's own enrollment. The page has been widely known since its conception, even receiving some institutional recognition through a partnership with Special Collections in 2019 to archive relevant posts for future generations.

So it only made sense that the page took on a new role when students were sent home in March 2020: the central chatroom for a student population who had no idea what was going on.

Although originally founded to be a space for satirical commentary on serious issues, the page's new role in the pandemic was still unfamiliar territory for its hard-working moderators. During the Black Lives Matter protests of the summer, moderators suspended its rule that “posts must be memes” to broaden the mandate of the group to serve as “a forum for students and alumni” — a “temporary” change that remains to this day.

For page administrator Torre Davy '21, such a shift in mission has come with a learning curve. When posts first started to get serious in April and May, Davy worried that there was no way to appease every group member. But as more people got used to the new rules of the page, tensions eased. While the page strayed from its formula, it did start to resemble a different, familiar Middlebury public forum.

“It kind of turned into the online Proctor board,” he mused. “Some people did post their crush lists there.”

If the meme page is the Proctor board, then Middlebury Twitter has taken the place of the lively din of a noon Atwater lunch: camaraderie, humor and the occasional serious discussion taking place among a broad, relatively unconnected portion of the Middlebury community.

Keith Chatinover '22.5 has appreciated the candor that the platform lends itself to. “[Midd Twitter] ended up really helping to remind me that I wasn't the only one struggling with mental health and class work,” he said.

Unlike the meme page, where students continue to post

chiefly about student issues, the public nature of Twitter and the knowledge that professors, staff and townspeople can read the tweets results in a different rhetoric.

“I think it's cool having this informal platform to interact with professors, including professors I've never had classes with,” Taite Shomo '20.5 said, also acknowledging that the publicness necessitates some self-censorship.

Michael Koutelos '21 was quick to identify the important role that the Midd Twitter played in one of the more disturbing moments of the fall semester, when Rodney Adams '21 and Jameel Uddin '22 were harassed by a racist student outside the Ross complex. That same night, they took to Twitter to recount the attack, garnering widespread support from students, alumni, faculty and the broader community.

There are, of course, other online Middlebury communities that have popped into relevance during the pandemic. Specialty Instagram accounts such as “Middlebury Missed Connections” “Midd Confessions” and social media pages for clubs and societies on campus have increased their presence in response to restrictions on in-person gatherings. Across the internet, Midd students gather in different spaces and ways not unlike they once did physically. But just as those in-person communities had their flaws, inequalities and exclusions, so too do our newly minted digital ones.

As our community becomes more nebulous, online spaces become unquestionably important hubs — but we can't forget their nuances or limitations. These spaces are sometimes ignorantly student-centric, dismissing or disparaging the views and actions of faculty, staff and townspeople, and can also be exclusive even among students.

This is not to say that different sub-communities are not essential in providing safe spaces online. But our current online communities are closed ecosystems built imperfectly for certain types of community members. We must be intentional in our use of these spaces and cognizant of the ways they do — and don't — serve the entire Middlebury community.

When the pandemic does — eventually, hopefully — end, much of our lives' migration online will remain: some work will forever be remote; Zoom calls will stay a part of our lives. Reconsideration of the online places where we go to connect with others is necessary for a healthier Middlebury community.

*Editor's Note: Jake Gaughan '22 is a News Editor for The Campus. Turn to page 96 to read more of his work.*





# A NEW AGE OF ADMISSIONS

## ADMISSIONS OFFICE MARKETS MIDD IN A YEAR ROILED BY ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

SABINE POUX & BENJY RENTON

Six days after most Middlebury students vacated campus to continue classes from home, the college admitted its biggest class of prospective students ever.

The acceptance letters received by 1,836 high school seniors this March, plus the 392 early decision acceptances doled out in December and February, were the first in a string of correspondences the college will send accepted students as it tries to virtually woo young adults who are making college decisions in one of the most unusual times in recent history. With campus completely closed to visitors, the Office of Admissions will now depend on webinars, social media posts, and its own students and alumni to replicate that feel-it-in-your-bones sense many students look for when they attend Preview Days in the spring.

Even with heightened virtual efforts, however, colleges around the world are facing Covid-19-related challenges that could lead students to either enroll in the fall as planned, or defer their admissions — a process experts refer to as “melt.” As a buffer, Middlebury admitted more students than usual to ensure it would reach its desired yield of 725–740 enrollees. The result is a pool of admittees that is nearly 700 students larger than last year’s and an acceptance rate that surpasses 20% for the first time in more than a decade.

The applicant pool also decreased this year, which contributed to the higher acceptance rate for the class of 2024. The decline of about 585 applications from last year’s record-breaking numbers is unrelated to the coronavirus — regular decision applications were due on Jan. 1, before China had even reported its first coronavirus-related deaths — but rather an ongoing demographic shift, according to Curvin, as fewer high school graduates come out of New England and more come out of the South and West.

“That was something we anticipated,” Curvin said. “We

had a record high last year and expected there would be a softening this year.”

Meanwhile, the college is inviting all hands on deck to show prospective students — including the 70% of admits who have never visited campus — why they should pick Middlebury. Instead of holding a virtual version of Preview Days, which was originally scheduled for early next week, Curvin said the office will try to maintain as much regular contact with students as possible, with daily emails and the help of Midd kids from all over the world.

Andrew Cassel, the college’s new director of social media and content producing, has been sharing informational posts about the college on its Instagram each day at noon and has turned to platforms like Facebook and TikTok to reach prospective students.

“Being able to engage with [newly admitted students] on TikTok helps differentiate Middlebury from other schools that may not have a TikTok presence,” Cassel said.

Senior Admissions Fellow Julia Sinton ’20.5 said she thinks one of Middlebury’s big selling points is its attractive campus. She noted that about half of the college’s visitors come in the summer. “So I think we’re hoping to be open again in the summer and have a lot of visitors then,” she said.

As one commenter wondered aloud on a College Confidential thread about the college’s uptick in admissions, it will be difficult to know until then how many students will actually matriculate in September. “It actually makes little sense, considering that they have had over-enrollment in the past and it didn’t go well,” they said about the higher acceptance rate. “Alternatively, perhaps they know something that the other NESCACs don’t.”

## PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS PARTAKE IN A NEW AGE OF ADMISSIONS

ADIL ALVI

With many colleges and universities now off limits to visitors, prospective students for the classes of 2025 and 2025.5 are navigating new ways to explore college campuses. The Admissions Office is providing alternative ways for high school students to learn about Middlebury and get a feel for the college.

“The admissions office is working to meet students where they currently are, and because we’re not offering on-campus opportunities, that means we’re doing a whole host of virtual and remote experiences for students,” Dean of Admissions Nicole Curvin said.

Without travel, admissions officers and student employees have been hard at work for months to build a virtual Middlebury for prospective students to explore.

“The pandemic, and not being able to travel as we usually do in the fall, has pushed us to do some things that we probably could’ve and should’ve been doing for a long time,” Director of Admissions Sam Prouty said.

The admissions website now features an interactive campus map and recorded webinars for students across different time zones.

These programs also allow for international students, many of whom cannot visit campus even during a normal year, to view campus from the same lens as other prospective students.

## ADMISSIONS TRIES OUT TEST-OPTIONAL POLICY

CAROLINE KAPP

The Middlebury Admissions Office announced that it will introduce a three-year trial period of test-optional admissions beginning with its fall 2020 admissions cycle. The policy was announced on April 8, 2020 and in part serves as a response to stresses from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Under the test-optional policy, students may choose not to submit any test scores as part of their application for admission.

Dean of Admissions Nicole Curvin sees this change as a way to offer flexibility to high school students who are facing high levels of uncertainty in their high school careers and future college application processes. Due to Covid-19, many high school students are grappling with the difficulties of navigating remote learning and unpredictability surrounding standardized test availability, format and timing.

“We will continue to take a holistic approach to reviewing applications,” Curvin wrote in an email to The Campus.

The admissions office is still working to determine how it will assess students who choose not to submit test scores, but Curvin predicts that the evaluation of these students would place a larger emphasis on academic profile and school context.

## APPLICATIONS UP 30% TO NEARLY 12,000 IN HISTORIC SURGE

ABIGAIL CHANG

Middlebury’s applicant pool for the class of 2025 set a new record this January, growing to 11,908 students — a 30% increase from last year’s 9,165 applicants.

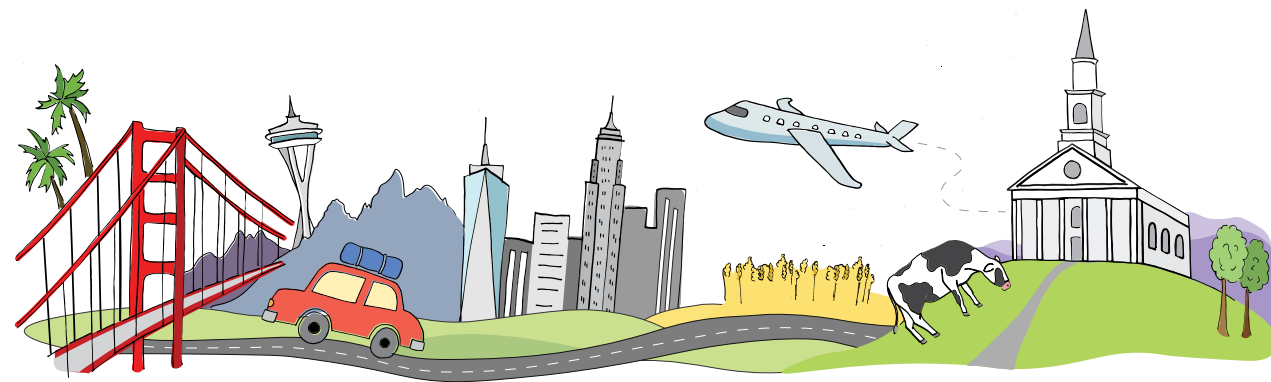
The class of 2025 will be the first group of students admitted while Middlebury pilots its test-optional policy. The college announced the policy last April, though Dean of Admissions Nicole Curvin said the admissions office had been considering implementing the idea for more than a year prior. Just under half of all applicants took advantage of the policy this year.

Curvin believes the hike in the number applicants is a product of several factors, including the implementation of the test-optional policy as it relates to accessibility.

“Accessing standardized testing in the last year has been challenging and students and families had great anxiety about this element of the admissions process,” Curvin said in an email to The Campus. She also pointed to the college’s handling of the fall semester as a reason for the historic increase.



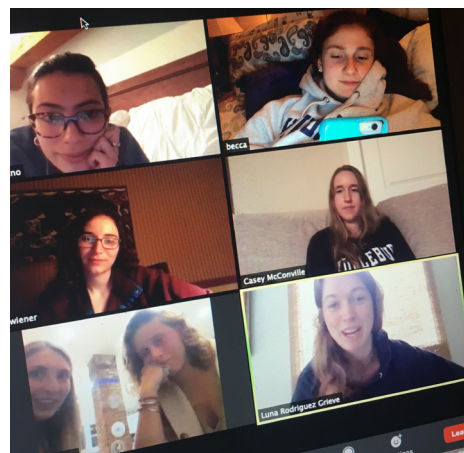
# OFF CAMPUS: ONE YEAR LATER



After students were sent away from Middlebury in March 2020, we started the Off-Campus Project in hopes of giving voice to the despair and hope precipitated by the interruption of campus life. We asked members of the community to share a snapshot of their lives with us. Almost a year later, we checked back in with some of the contributors to see what had changed — and what hadn't. Their updated entries are featured below. You can read their full spring stories and those of others using the QR code.



Gorman and several of her classmates gathered in a Zoom call for a virtual graduation celebration.



## ONE FOR THE BOOKS

BECCA GORMAN '21

### MARCH 2020

I worked my butt off to be able to walk across the graduation stage this May. The past four years have been the most challenging of my life. While overcoming incredible personal difficulties, I missed a year of school cumulatively. There were many moments along my Middlebury journey that I doubted I would ever walk across the graduation stage.

For some reason, putting on a cap and gown and joining my classmates in walking across the stage at graduation to the sounds of applause from family, faculty, friends and coaches that I have grown to love is everything. It is a concrete moment to mark the end of a tremendous journey of personal growth and academic prowess. It is a symbolic end to my childhood. It is a formal goodbye to a college and town I have learned to call home. In the grand scheme of things, an in-person graduation ceremony is the least of our world's priorities. But for me, I actually think it is the only thing I would be devastated to lose. I am not sure what is going to unfold over the next weeks and months. I am not sure when we will get to cross that stage. But it would mean the world to me to be able to be united as a class one last time and properly finish what we started.

### DECEMBER 2020

Evidently, I did not get an in-person graduation ceremony. I graduated sitting on the couch in my childhood home between my two parents. We had a celebratory family Zoom "toast" afterward, and later I had another Zoom "toast" with friends. It was not the graduation I had hoped for, but was still somewhat sentimental. I am not sure what a future graduation would look like... or that I would want one (in the same official way at least). Maybe a large party at our five-year reunion would suffice instead. I never thought that I would feel lucky to be in the Class of 2020, but I sure am.

## CROSSING INTO THE UNKNOWN

SIMONE KRAUS BL'05

### MAY 2020

In March, some E.U. countries decided to close their external borders — a decision that affected my life directly. I was born, raised and educated in Germany; my parents originally came from former Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic. They left their home country after the Prague Spring was crushed in August 1968. I used to have a complicated relationship with my parents' home country because of what happened in the past. I usually ran away from it, rather than to it. But the reality of closed borders changed many things.

I was in Germany when I learned that the Czech border would be closed at midnight. I realized that I didn't have any blood relatives in Germany whatsoever; my friends are scattered all over the world, and my parents, who spend most of their free time in the Czech Republic, were on the other side of the border. Without needing to think about it, I packed up my things, squeezed as much as I could into my car, locked up my apartment and set off.

### JANUARY 2021

I still divide my time between Germany and the Czech Republic. With my family based in both countries, I have my hands full with beaurocratic things. Lockdown measures in both countries have become much more complex. In that respect, my life has become more complicated. I'm constantly following the latest news and updates on borders, Covid-19 tests, quarantine measures and the availability of FFP2 masks (in certain parts of Germany 'normal' masks are no longer allowed; you have to wear FFP2 masks in shops).



## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

MICHAEL WASSERSTEIN '21

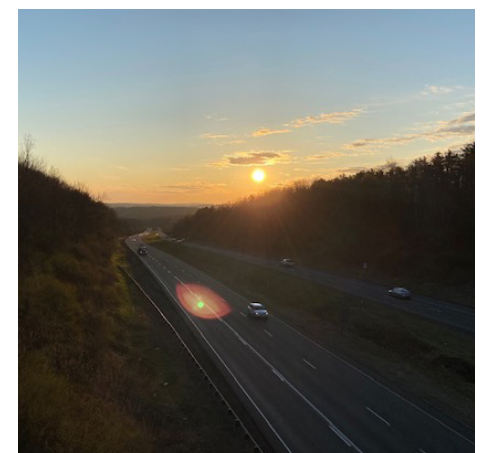
### APRIL 2020

I've been fortunate to return to a home with a loving family, stable internet and access to food. For me, the biggest things that I feel like I've lost are in-person social interactions, in-person classes, my spring track season and my summer internship. Obviously I'm sad to lose these exciting parts of my life, but I realize that I'm lucky that my family members and I have not had any health issues during this scary time.

I've tried to do things that I wouldn't normally do. I've made some TikTok videos, I started a blog and I've kept myself updated on the news. I think the best way to handle this situation is by walking away from it with something positive — coming away a better, more well-rounded person.

### DECEMBER 2020

I'm happy to have had an in-person experience at Middlebury this fall. I realize that not every college reopened this fall, so I'm really lucky to have been able to spend my seventh Middlebury semester in Vermont. I was also extremely happy with the buy-in mentality that Middlebury students took this fall. We wanted to have a successful semester, and we did so because we all took necessary steps to prevent the spread of the virus. Lastly, getting to spend time with other people my age — something that did not happen much during the spring and fall — made me happy.





## STATION ELEVEN

EMILY ST. JOHN MENDE

"The extremity of the fictional pandemic makes quarantining and wearing a mask during our real life pandemic seem like a walk in a park."

— Ideal Dowling '22

## MOONFLOWER MURDERS

ANTHONY HOROWITZ

"It's a murder mystery within a murder mystery — two books for the price of one!"

— Sarah Fagan '22

## THE INCENDIARIES

R.O. KWON

"Nothing makes you want to be back at school like a novel about students at a small northeastern liberal arts college slowly descending into violence through a religious cult."

— Riley Board '22

## THE WATER DANCER

TA-NEHISI COATES

"I love how Coates uses magic and mystery to tell such a gripping story about slavery."

— Emmanuel Tamrat '22

## HOW SHOULD A PERSON BE?

SHEILA HETI

"Stopping short of providing an answer, this book makes you feel a little better about not having one yourself."

— Harriet LeFavour '21

## HOMO DEUS

YUVAL NOAH HARIRI

"It talks about people, history, ideologies etc. in a way that makes me feel less alone and unsure of myself and my place in the world."

— Constance Gooding '23

## CRUEL OPTIMISM

LAUREN BERLANT

"Berlant's take on affect theory reminds us of the central role that sentiment and attachment play in shaping our motives, actions and realities."

— Bochu Ding '21

## SLOUCHING TOWARDS BETHLEHEM

JOAN DIDION

"When things got difficult, I found solace in these stories of small victories from the past."

— Nicole Pollack '20.5

## WHAT WE READ

*As Middlebury students, we were used to operating a mile a minute. Quarantine forced us to take life at a slower pace. After settling into this unhurried tempo, The Campus editorial board found solace and joy in these books —we suggest you read them too.*

## GREAT BRITISH BAKING SHOW

"It was charmingly sweet and fun and provided me with pure joy. A simple pleasure: low effort to watch, low effort to enjoy."

— Owen Mason-Hill '22

## THE WALKING DEAD

"It finds space to ask intriguing questions about human nature and doing good between all the action-packed scenes fighting zombies."

— Tony Sjodin '23

## WHAT WE WATCHED

*Since the pandemic triggered lockdowns across the nation in March, we have weathered a year of restrictions on our movements, gatherings and activities. Stuck inside for months on end with little to do but stare at our screens, here are the shows and movies that The Campus editorial board immersed themselves in to escape quarantine boredom.*

## DERRY GIRLS

"It revolves around teenagers who are able to maintain semblances of their normal adolescence amid historical uncertainty and violence which definitely parallels our current circumstances."

— Lily Laesch '23

## OUTLANDER

"Love and adventure on the Scottish Highlands with a bit of time travel mixed in between. It's so fantastical and dramatic that I can forget everything else."

— Sophia McDermott-Hughes '23

## BIG MOUTH

"It's at once a poignant take on this really awkward time in our lives and an irreverent escape from having to worry about the pandemic."

— James Finn '20.5

## SPARE PARTS

"Just an all-around fun and funny feel-good movie!"

— Sabrina Templeton '22

## ANNA KARENINA

"I loved the elaborate scene changes and how the theater was used as the primary backdrop. The film renders the opulence of the characters' lifestyle and the volatility of Anna's position in Russian society."

— Abigail Chang '23

## TED LASSO

"Entertaining and cheerful with the perfect hint of humor — just the thing to escape the pandemic despair."

— Erin Kelly '21

## BRIDGERTON

"It's Gossip Girl meets Pride and Prejudice. It's fast-paced, scandalous and highly enjoyable."

— Hannah Bensen '21



# WHICH WAY HOME?

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS NAVIGATE THE PANDEMIC WORLD

SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES

When Middlebury suddenly announced it was shuttering the campus on March 10, 2020 international students were faced with a difficult decision: should they stay or should they go home? Where would they live and how would they get there? The decisions were particularly difficult for first years, who had only just begun to adjust to life in the U.S. Here are the experiences of three of them.

### ASSIF-UL ISLAM

Asif-Ul Islam '23 told his parents not to pick him up at the airport. But after not seeing their son for 448 days, “they couldn’t stay away.”

When school suddenly closed in March, there were no flights to Islam’s home country of Bangladesh, so he decided to stay in the U.S. He had no idea it would be almost 15 months before he saw his family again.

His roommate’s family hosted him in their Cleveland, Ohio home throughout the duration of the spring semester. When new ICE guidelines threw student visa-holders’ statuses into question, Islam worried about getting stranded in Bangladesh should he return home. He decided to stay in the U.S. over the summer, renting an apartment in San Antonio, Texas.

His twice daily calls home did little to assuage worries.



When his parents got sick and his dad’s garment factory suffered during the economic downturn, he could do nothing to help. And as cases continued to rise in the U.S., his parents also could do nothing to protect their son.

Islam had never spent such a long time away from home. He missed the comfort and ease of speaking his own language. He missed the buzz of Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh where he grew up. He missed the cram of the city’s 18 million residents filling the streets and the chatter of friendly passerbys greeting each other. He missed his family and his childhood friend and surrogate brother, Meshqua. And he missed seeing his now 12-year-old sister grow up.

After hugging his crying mom in the airport and traveling 20 minutes home, the reunion came as a shock to Islam. “I was like, ‘Who was that? She doesn’t look like my baby sister anymore,’” he said. “Her voice has changed. The way she talks has changed.”

After over a year of longing for home, living in Dhaka again was an adjustment. The busy city he had missed so much kept him awake at night as cars honked outside his window until the wee hours of the morning. But slowly, he grew accustomed once again. After a month at home, Islam rested easy.

### LYNN CHAI

When Lynn Chai '23 found out about the school closing, she knew she had to act fast. Though it was 3 a.m. back home in Shanghai, her parents were awake and worrying



as they tried to buy plane tickets together over the phone. She managed to book a flight from Burlington to JFK and from there to home on March 15.

She made it to Burlington Airport without a hitch, but everything went downhill from there. Her flight was delayed for five hours, which she spent anxiously checking on her connecting flight to Shanghai and watching the layover window she had carefully built shrink bit by

bit.

When she arrived in JFK at last, she rushed off the plane and caught the shuttle to her departing terminal. As she waited in the shuttle car, a man approached her and asked, “Are you from Wuhan? Are you Chinese?”

When Chai didn’t respond, he pushed her six bags off her luggage trolley in anger. By the time she snapped out of her shocked silence, the train doors were opening and the man was gone. She hastily gathered her luggage and rushed to the check-in counter, only to find her plane had stopped boarding.

Feeling defeated, she called home to tell her parents what had happened and figure out her next moves. Anxious and shaken by the incident with the strange man, Chai held in her tears. “I had to pretend to be fine,” she said. “If I cried, it would make them more anxious.”

Chai spent a panicked night in the airport hotel refreshing pages over and over to find another flight home. At first, it seemed she wouldn’t be able to return until April or May even if she could afford the soaring ticket prices. Luckily, a last-minute cancelation gave Chai a chance and, though she had to spend eight times the usual price, she pounced on the opportunity. She was going home at last.

### PATRICK WACHIRA

Patrick Wachira '23 knew he couldn’t go home to Kenya. He spent the week of March 10 meeting with his commons dean Scott Barnicle over and over again to try to figure out his next steps and get approval to stay on

campus. When he found out the college was letting him stay, he felt a wave of relief wash over him.

At first, the campus was eerily quiet, filled with “the air of emptiness of a place used to having a lot of people.” But the 120 students who stayed through the spring semester quickly adjusted and made their own little community. The shrinking population gave those left on campus more opportunities to connect. As Vermont’s mud season gave way to a gloriously green spring, Wachira did most of his school work outside with friends, both new and old, “half working, half talking with friends and basking in the sun.” They went on near daily bike rides across campus and took frequent forays to Hannaford for grocery hauls, returning to the Forest kitchens to cook fried chicken, fish soup and any variety of recipes they found online.

It was an almost idyllic time in many ways. However, though he was enjoying campus life, Wachira worried for his home country. As Kenya’s economy took a hit from prolonged lockdowns, desperation increased back home and crime rates rose in the capital city of Nairobi. He watched the news daily and called home often to see how his family was doing.

After attending boarding school, Wachira was used to spending long periods of time away from home. He frequently flipped through old diary entries of days spent with family, memories he’d stored in anticipation of not seeing his family for months. After dinner, he often made himself a cup of tea, a tradition at his grandmother’s house.

Though separated by over 7,000 miles, Wachira never struggled to “feel the love” of his family back home as he surrounded himself with the love of a new family on campus.



ILLUSTRATED BY SARAH FAGAN





# OUR BODIES IN QUARANTINE

A COLLECTION OF SHORT VIGNETTES

Without fixed elements and superstructure during quarantine, I often had no idea what to do with my time — free time that would cast a judgemental look when I did not fill it meaningfully.

*RUHI KAMDAR '22*

There's a stickiness to it, that feeling of being alone with your thoughts, like quicksand. You step your foot and it sucks you in. The more you squirm and search for something solid, the faster you seem to sink into your thoughts.

*BRINLEA LA BARGE '23.5*

It's in the numbed feet that stand vulnerable yet persistent in gooey sand that flirts with twirling salty froth of the ebbing tide. It's in the muddy footsteps that carry me miles and miles into the grapefruit mist of a new day burning. It's in the pitter-patter of wool-encased toes on creaking floorboards that float comforting laughter to my ears and rosiness to our cheeks. Together, we breathe deeply into this space of rawness — this moment of now.

*HALEY HUTCHINSON '23.5*

Lockdown caused a huge disconnect for me. I have always been someone who found focus and balance by being active and social. I have had to re-evaluate how I center myself. Finding activities that engage both mind and body has been a challenge, but one I'm starting to enjoy.

*JAMES BLAZYE '23*

Over the summer, with my internship cancelled and hours of free time, I began hiking every day. Hiking five or six hours a day, I got familiar with my body in a way I had never been before, aware of the muscles in my ankles and feet, my posture, how my hands would swell on a hot day. I was conscious of the function of my body, its endurance and health, and this focus on function allowed me to show my body a kindness I hadn't before.

*ISABEL LICKEY '23*

I found peace of mind through the help of my therapist. I am fortunate enough to be able to reach out for help, which I know is a huge privilege. Being able to talk to a professional remotely helped me discover my identity, connect with my body and figure out the best ways to cope with negative emotions during the pandemic. One day I hope that both mental illness and therapy will no longer be highly stigmatized in society.

*AMANDA FRANK '23.5*

With remote classes, canceled sports seasons and less time spent in social settings, the pandemic has posed countless challenges for us all this past year. Despite these and many more obstacles, one silver lining that has surprisingly come out of this pandemic for me is time. The hectic student-athlete life rarely allows for much spare time, taking particular focus away from my mental health and caring for my body off the tennis court. I embraced this opportunity through the addition of daily self-reflections in thought and writing, modified home workouts, music and meditation and many video chats with friends and family.

*GENA HUANG '24*



# ‘MORE THAN JUST FOOD’

## TRACING THE HISTORY OF THE KNOLL FROM GRASSY HILL TO COMMUNITY HAVEN

CÉCELIA SCHEUER

VAN BARTH

**When Bennet Konesni, Chris Howell and Jean Hamilton, all members of the class of 2004.5, first planted the idea of an organic garden at Middlebury in 2002, they did not expect it to become a haven for students seeking refuge from a global pandemic.**

The values of connectivity and serenity upon which The Knoll was originally built help explain its newfound importance during a semester of social distancing and uncertainty. “We always had this thought that it would be about more than just food,” Konesni said.

Throughout the fall semester, gathering sizes have remained strictly limited, and students continue to flock to The Knoll to spend time with friends amid the garden beds. “[The founders] really wanted it to be a communal and welcoming space for anyone that came to appreciate it, whether that was to walk, run, sit, learn, just be — or gather a bouquet of flowers,” Megan Brakeley ’06, The Knoll’s current manager, said.

Konesni was unsurprised to learn about the central role that The Knoll has played for the campus community this semester. “That’s what we wanted,” he said. “It’s amazing that even during a pandemic, The Knoll is there for people to go to and use this challenging moment to look inward.”

Eighteen years ago, Konesni and Hamilton imagined developing an organic garden to serve as an educational

space that would foster a connection with the natural environment and local community. But convincing the college that the project could be sustained was no easy task.

“The administration was not into it at first,” Konesni said. “But we wanted a farm because the act of growing things is powerful, and we knew it was educational. We thought that if we have sports fields and art museums and concert halls, we should have a farm, too.” Following countless conversations with peers, professors and town residents, veteran Vermont farmer Scout Proft connected Konesni with Cornwall resident Jay Leshinsky, who helped bring their vision to life.

Leshinsky guided Konesni and Hamilton for more than a year as they worked to build the idea, mobilize resources, recruit faculty and administrative supporters and find a site for the garden. Eventually, they received the green light from then-President John McCardell to use a nearby parcel of the college’s nearly 6,000 acres of Vermont land. The hunt for the perfect location began.

The founding team received funding from the Student Government Association to start a new student-run organization. Not long after, they invited President John McCardell to plant the first cover crop and see what had become of their project.

“He came out there with the chairman of the Board of Trustees, too,” Konesni said. “We definitely had to keep hammering the fact that it would be a liberal-arts, multi-disciplinary approach to growing food, but they were excited about it.”

Education and inter-community relationships continue to be a central focus of The Knoll. The farm has partnerships with Middlebury College Dining, Facilities, Environmental Affairs, the Center for Community Engagement, FoodWorks and the Center for Spiritual and Religious Life — which was responsible for bringing the Dalai Lama to The Knoll to bless a marble bench, known as the meditation bench, in 2013.

The Knoll also sells a portion of its produce to Middlebury Dining Services, which has been a point of contention among community members who have expressed concerns about siphoning profits away from local business. When The Knoll was absorbed into the college budget in 2018, the focus was able to shift away from production and more toward renewed community engagement.

“The students never wanted to compete with local growers because they saw that the relational aspect is

what brings so much meaning,” Brakeley said. The Knoll donates much of its produce to the HOPE Food Shelf in Middlebury and has been giving produce to members of Vermont’s native Abenaki community for two years.

The Knoll is located on Abenaki land and has partnered with local Abenaki chief Don Stevens as part of a broader initiative to improve land recognition efforts at the college. That initiative included growing Abenaki corn and beans in the 2019 season under Stevens’s guidance, with broader educational opportunities planned for 2020.

In 2017, the organic garden celebrated its 15th anniversary and was officially renamed The Knoll, after the small hill where its creators’ vision was realized. The Knoll’s founding mission — to educate and nourish its surrounding environment — came into clear focus when the onset of the pandemic left many staff and community members without a steady source of income.

“The college basically gave us permission to grow produce in anticipation of the community’s emergency food needs,” Brakeley said. Brakeley not only continued to grow produce as an essential worker but also received approval to bring in four dining employees for paid full-time work at The Knoll over the summer.

“We were able to make something beautiful out of a really tricky situation,” Brakeley said.



## LIFE LOOKS DIFFERENT AND SO DOES THE STUDENT BODY: ATHLETES ON LEAVE

JENNY LANGERMAN

Since sports are an integral part of the Middlebury experience for student-athletes, some have made the decision to not return to campus this fall.

The decision to take the semester off was not an easy one for most. For women's soccer captain Izzy Hartnett '21, reaching a decision meant contemplating what she wanted out of her final year at Middlebury.

"When I spent time contemplating what has formed my Middlebury experience, my mind went immediately to the women's soccer team," Hartnett said. "I was not ready to give up the MWS I have known and loved for the past three years."

Though the cancellation of sports competition is an

unfortunate reality, many of these student-athletes have found silver linings in deferring. Football captain and QB1 Will Jernigan '21 is excited about the professional opportunities provided by this free time, which he cites as a reason to unenroll this fall.

"It [will] give me a little more work experience on my resume this fall," Jernigan said. "Not only that, but I'll have another summer before returning to school, so it gives me another summer internship cycle that I'm excited to take advantage of."

In some way or another, Middlebury's student-athletes on leave are diving into a new normal: a semester without sports.

## YOUPOWER PUTS NEW OUTDOOR SPIN ON FITNESS CLASSES

NIAMH CARTY

YouPower, Middlebury's student-run spin club, looks a little different this year because of Covid-19 safety guidelines, but it's as popular as ever. The club typically offers its classes in a studio in the Freeman International Center, but, this year, the club has relocated to the Ridgeline parking lot to allow for ample social distancing outside. The bikes are kept in a storage unit and rolled into the lot before each class.

The new environment does present some logistical challenges. The club switched from their old sound system — which relied on access to a power outlet — to a bluetooth speaker, and instructors now use a megaphone rather than a microphone.

YouPower's usual small, dimly lit room in the FIC

creates an intimate atmosphere perfect for spinners, but participants have found pros to the club's new home in the Ridgeline parking lot.

"While I am eager to be back in the studio, the outdoor studio has been a great alternative and can perhaps give us future opportunities to expand and diversify our class offerings," new instructor Sam Segal '23 said.

Despite these challenges, YouPower has managed to create the sense of community the club generates in a traditional year.

"There is a lot of uncertainty about the future right now, but it feels special to have a space to move together," YouPower President Lilly Kuhn '21.5 said.



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Scoop sports podcast on  
Spotify*

## FALL COACHES ADJUST TO A SEASON WITHOUT COMPETITIVE PLAY

BRINLEA LA BARGE

When the NESCAC announced the cancelation of fall sports competition in early July, teams across campus began to brainstorm ways to make the autumn months as productive as possible.

For Bob Ritter, head coach of the football team, adjusting to new safety precautions on campus means focusing more on individual technique, stretching, speed and agility. He plans to shorten the amount of time the team spends on the field, splitting his squad into smaller pods.

Although small group practices and the loss of a locker room space means limited face-to-face interaction, Ritter thinks the team's virtual conversations this summer helped athletes bond in a way he hadn't seen before.

"I think in some ways [we] might have gotten to know the first years better over the summer than we traditionally do," Ritter said.

Middlebury coaches are also concerned about how to attract prospective students to their athletic programs amid a pandemic. Athletes might need to choose a school without ever visiting campus or meeting the team, instead relying on virtual materials provided by college coaches.

For now, Ritter and other coaches are taking the fall "four days at a time," as the football coach joked, using this season as an outlet to relieve stress and develop important skills. Luckily, it's part of the job for both athletes and coaches to embrace challenges like these with open arms.

"I think sport always teaches resilience and perseverance, teamwork and goal setting, and this year will be no different in that regard," women's volleyball coach Sarah Raunecker said.

## NO COACHES, NO CONTACT, NO COMPETITION: CLUB TEAMS PLAY ON

NICK NONNENMACHER

Students woke up with renewed energy and excitement on Sept. 17 as the college officially began Phase Two of its gradual reopening. While many groups of students ventured into town, many of the school's club sports teams got to work.

"Clubs are active, and it's really important they're active because of all the things we can't do this fall," said Doug Connelly, the director of outdoor programs and club sports.

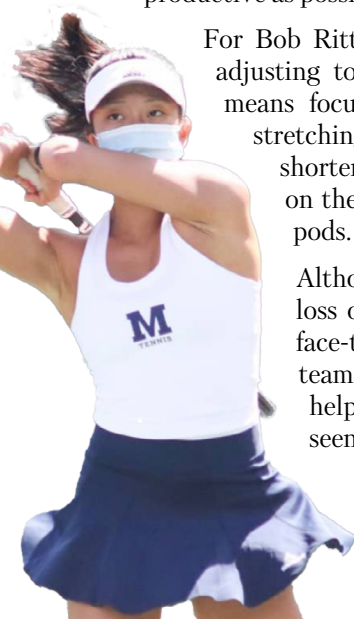
Due to the college's temporary hiring freeze, many club team coaches have been unable to return to their seasonal positions this fall. While Connelly and the former head coach of the crew team, Rich Connell, oversee practices, a few clubs plan to operate more autonomously.

Under normal circumstances, both the women's and the men's ultimate frisbee team would practice at the same

time and scrimmage after workouts. This season, players are required to bring their own discs and practices are increasingly focused on conditioning and fitness. The biggest challenge, according to captain Brooke Laird '22, has been recruiting new members to the team and introducing them to the community.

"This semester we have to be very intentional in how we set up practices and introduce players to the sport and the community," Laird said. "The emphasis this fall will be on having fun and being chill, and we're all pretty excited to have the opportunity to play at all."

As the fall continues to progress, club sports will become better adapted to the strange and harsh circumstances of this semester. The resilience of every team speaks to the enthusiasm of club athletes and their sense of community.





# THE SHOW GOES ON

RIDDIM WORLD  
DANCE TROUPE  
ZOOMS IN ON HIP-HOP,  
KATHAK AND MORE

RAIN JI

Audiences joined the RIDDIM dance crew for their fall end-of-semester show “RIDDIM World Dance Troupe Zooms In” on Saturday, Nov. 14. Some spectated from a tented stage set up behind Mahaney Arts Center while others admired at a distance, watching the performance projected live on McCullough lawn. The show was performed twice — once at 6 p.m. and again at 9 p.m. — as part of the “Light Up the Night” Fall Arts Fest series.

The show opened with a video of crew members trickling into a Zoom meeting, an ode to the way interactions on campus have changed this semester. In a brief introduction, members engaged in hilarious activities without realizing their microphones or videos were on, a frequent and relatable occurrence for many taking remote classes. After the audience had a good laugh at Max Lucas ’21 turning somersaults in bed, Malia Armstrong ’22.5 putting on mascara and Jarlenys Mendez ’23 being nowhere to be seen, attention turned to the stage lit with purple lights and filled with dancers dressed in all black.

The first performance was “Studio 2020,” choreographed by Lucas, Paula Somoza ’21 and Miraal Naseer ’21. Dancers followed the beats of the rhythmic “Safety” by Gashi, bringing blistering energy to the stage even as the weather began to drop below 50 degrees. As the first dance

progressed, dancers were able to demonstrate more individual moves as others provided space for them by staying low; they chose and adapted moves from across the dance spectrum, forming their own visually compelling stories.

As the dancers from the first performance ran off, six new ones appeared onstage, dancing to Ozuna, Doja Cat and Sia’s “Del Mar,” executing complicated choreography over lyrical and sexy music.

Waves of dancers joined the next act, choreographed by Madeline Elkes ’22. Her piece “Stay” engaged the audience with a performance of striking synchronicity. Despite an appearance of gentleness as the crew danced to the soft whispers of singer Gracie Abrams, the moves grew forceful at times, following the rise and fall of the music.

“Living during a pandemic is stressful, and I wanted my dance to be a stress relief for everyone,” Elkes said.

Later was “Psychoanalysis,” which featured a green-lit stage and chill beats. Isabelle Davis ’21, the choreographer of the piece, described it as “blending different modern techniques that I have studied and channeling this into a fresh take on modern style dance.”

Following the piece, chairs, blankets and pillows were brought on stage for a short but engaging transition performed to the Kanye West song “Famous.” In a whiplash-inducing style shift, the next dance, “Leeeé,” was a Polish-folk-dance-inspired piece. The performance touched on themes of nature, mythology and death, according to choreographer Lucas.

The next piece came at another 180-degree twist — “Electricity,” designed by Ali DePaolo ’23. Next up, “Perfect Pose,” choreographed by Kevin Mata ’22 made an “explicit attempt to understand what it means for different bodies to perform femininity in a celebratory way.” Dancing to Cousin Stizz’s “Perfect,” performers used their bodies to convey a strong, defiant attitude.

The night concluded with “Telephone” — in bright red lights, waves of dancers sprinted across the stage, presenting one final move for the audience before finishing with a bow.

Among loud cheers, the performers blew kisses to the audience through masks. The show was captivating from the first ding of someone entering a Zoom meeting to the final strike of poses.



- 44 -

EMMANUEL TAMRAT

## ‘FINALLY’: PRODUCTION WITH AN ALL-ASIAN CAST SPOTLIGHTS ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION

EDYTH MOLDOW

“finally,” a collection of short plays and monologues written by Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) playwrights curated by Emily Ballou ’21 for her senior work in directing, turned a spotlight on the lack of Asian representation in the media and the performing arts. The show, which ran in person and virtually on Nov. 6 and 7, explored themes of belonging, acceptance and identity.

Inspired by the presence of a historically and currently underrepresented Asian community, “finally” followed the journeys of Asian students, writers, actors and musicians as they navigate the obstacles of the white-dominated artistic world. “Many AAPI actors had to play stereotypical ‘fresh off the boat’ immigrant roles and imitate Asian accents because they didn’t have other available options,” Production Assistant Sean Rhee ’21 said. “So, this production clearly expresses that AAPI playwrights and actors have so much potential beyond those tropes.”

At the show, the curtains open on a small bookshop where two women peruse the selection of plays lining the shelves, setting the scene for Mia King’s “You Barely Existed.” The characters engage in a discussion about the limited selection of monologues available to budding Asian American actors and the young actress is left disappointed after seeing few options for leads that she can relate to and portray.

“Given the ‘perpetual foreigner’ label that constantly follows AAPI communities and the rise in anti-Asian discrimination during the Covid-19 pandemic, this production fits perfectly into the modern context as well, indicating that we belong where we are,” Rhee said.

“finally” exists as a call to action for all members of the Middlebury community and the arts to hear and share a more diverse set of voices of color. In identifying a problem in theatre, Ballou hopes to encourage further inclusivity in lieu of the one-dimensional and often racist portrayals of Asian and Asian American characters.

## COCOON CONTINUES THE TRADITION OF STORYTELLING AMID THE PANDEMIC

ACADIA KLEPEIS

Masks were on, but eyes and ears were open, and the audience reacted enthusiastically to the highs and lows of each story at the eighth annual Cocoon storytelling evening, which took place on Oct. 10 at Mahaney Arts Center’s Robison Hall. The Middlebury Moth-Up, a small student organization inspired by The Moth phenomenon, charges itself with the mission of promoting the craft of storytelling.

This year’s Cocoon was loosely centered around the theme “Downpour.” Co-President of the Middlebury Moth-Up Alexandra Burns ’21.5 said that the team sought a theme that reflected the chaos of recent months. Each of the four storytellers, including two students and two staff members, took their own approach.

Middlebury horticulturalist Tim Parsons told a heartwarming story about gaining a fourth child when his three daughters convinced him to get a puppy. Regina Fontanelli ’22 spoke about the evolution of her complex relationship with her mother throughout her adolescence and her college years. Emily Ballou ’21 had the audience in stitches as she reminisced about spending the day with a cranky old woman at a Vermont fair. And finally, Knoll Food & Garden Educator Megan Brakeley ’06 told an emotional story about the interplay between her family, her identity and the life of her dog, Burt.

Sacheli described Cocoon as the “more formal cousin” of the monthly Moth-Up events. Traditionally, Cocoon has taken place during fall family weekend in front of a sold-out crowd of 300 people or more. Although it was live-streamed, the stories were still told live in front of a limited audience. “We thought it would be important for our speakers to have friends and family come watch them,” Moth-Up Co-President Zeinab Thiam ’21 said. Audience response is a key component of these events, responding to stories with both laughter and applause.

“If [the speakers] feel better telling the story, it will read better to everybody,” Sacheli said.



- 45 -



# INCOMING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS ORGANIZE SUMMER ZOOMS TO BREAK THE ICE

CHARLIE KEOHANE

As summer boredom set in and many students were quarantined inside, a group of incoming first years decided to organize weekly Zoom meetings to meet each other before arriving on campus.

It began in the late spring, when a small group of students decided to host an informal Zoom session. When it went well, they decided to make it a regular occurrence. Over the coming months, class-wide Zooms became a tradition every Wednesday and Saturday — events where dozens of students met for hours at a time to get to know each other and form friendships.

Meg Farley '24 was a frequent Zoom attendee and occasional Zoom host. Farley also did most of the outreach to the class as a whole. She made digital posters with the Zoom links and shared them on Class of 2024 Facebook and GroupMe, encouraging everyone to hop on the calls.

"It was a really great way to meet people, and start to understand them and start to trust them," Farley said.

Farley estimated that there were around 10 consistent people in the Zoom calls, but sometimes up to 40 joined. In the first few calls, students were mostly introducing themselves and their interests. Sometimes prospective students would join the rooms, and others would try to convince them to commit to Middlebury.

As people became more comfortable with each other, conversations became more personal. "The energy of the Zooms would change based on what hour [it was], sometimes it was very chaotic, sometimes very academic, and we would get into deep discussions about politics or religion or philosophy or 'what even is life,'" Farley said.

There were many friendly debates over topics like favorite foods and colors, and students compiled an extensive Google Doc of activities they wanted to do once they all got to campus in August.

Farley remarked that the host of the call had a lot of power as they would create the breakout rooms, often pairing together friends and people with whom they would be compatible.

The Zoom sessions often lasted until the early morning hours and even hit 24 hours. Across different time zones, some students would sleep as others would be waking up, and many people came and went according to their schedules.

"It was such a chill environment. I saw so many people cook and clean and eat," frequent Zoom attendee Luna Simone-Gonzalez '24 said. "Everyone just went through their entire daily routines while in quarantine and were just sharing it with people and talking."

They also allowed the Regs and Febs to meet each other



and socialize. Simone-Gonzalez looks forward to catching up with her Feb friends when they arrive on campus. The pandemic and quarantine helped contribute to the popularity of the calls. Many students' summer plans and activities were canceled, leaving them with more free time than expected.

"I think it was a cool way to get outside of the box in a time when you weren't allowed to leave your house, especially with a new time like entering college," Simone-Gonzalez said.

Farley agreed. "For those of us who didn't socialize over the summer because of Covid-19, this was my primary social outlet for a lot of the summer. If it wasn't for the pandemic, this totally would not have happened," she said.

If students were bored during the week, they could host an impromptu Zoom call outside of the regularly scheduled Wednesday and Saturday sessions, and usually there were people around to join. Reika Herman '24, who was living in Singapore over the summer, appreciated meeting new people. She said that she even met two of her current closest friends via the Zooms.

"Especially because I was overseas, I was really, really nervous about sort of knowing people already going into Middlebury," Herman said. "It was really comforting to have that group of people going into campus."

For many students, the calls exemplified the strength and the warmth of the Middlebury community.

"I wanted a small community, a tight-knit community. I wanted to be at a school where people seem very friendly and open and outgoing. Going to the Zooms definitely reaffirmed that," Herman said.

For Farley, the summer Zoom sessions and the friendships she formed confirmed that she made the right college decision.

"It affirmed that the small sliver of our campus is just so lovely, and it made me so excited to get to campus and meet everyone else," she said.

# IN VOGUE

## 'CLOVER MAGAZINE' CREATES SPACE FOR THE FASHIONABLE INTELLECTUAL

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL

Clover Magazine, Middlebury's only student-run fashion publication, aims to serve as an outlet for the stylish mind within academia. By snooping around their website, you'd get the impression that it has been around since back when more than six people could be in a room at the same time, but Clover was founded this summer by Karinne Aguirre '21 and Madison Brito '21.5.

According to its website, the magazine was founded as a platform for students "to think critically on the world of fashion within our own boundaries and on a global stage, provide an outlet to capture and create new forms of sartorial expression and redefine what New England fashion can be."

The founders made the decision to adopt a blog-style publication method. Article topics are decided at a monthly meeting and subsequently released on a regular schedule, with a few days between posts. This way,

according to Brito, the magazine is "more casual, more reader friendly and more honest."

"It's a snapshot of the times in which we live," Brito said. "We're not skirting around uncomfortable topics and writing about what we think the readers want, instead of what they actually want to read."

The magazine's content focuses on the fashion world's complexity. "Fashion has a more profound meaning. It's hard to pinpoint, but fashion as a way of expression became more interesting to me over time. There's a lot to be said about it," Aguirre said.

Clover seeks to place itself in the conversations that explore the role of fashion in the global community and how it affects the lives of students. "Everyone contributes to [fashion], consciously or not," Aguirre said.



## NEW MAGAZINE 'TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN' SPOTLIGHTS STUDENT CURIOSITY

EDYTH MOLDOW

This year, a new magazine made its way to the Middlebury campus courtesy of Ben Beese '21.5 and a board of eight editors. Brought to life this past September, To Whom it May Concern provides the student body with an online forum wherein they can share what they find captivating: ideas, passions, niche interests and projects.

The creation of the platform drew on and departed from several prominent existing platforms on campus. Beese intended to create a different platform than a traditional newspaper publication. "There's a lot of things to learn about that aren't news, which are worthwhile to talk about," Beese said. He hoped that To Whom it May Concern would offer a place for students to share their passions with one another outside of traditional rigid formats like the Spring Symposium.

The articles on the To Whom it May Concern page include decolonizing museums, teaching mathematics

as a language and how this can combat math anxiety, creating social solidarity in times of Covid and connecting ecofeminism and mosquitos.

"What we were trying to emulate was the type of conversations you would have in a Proctor booth: really educated conversations on really important topics," Grace Hering '21.5, the publication's treasurer, said.

According to Hering, people lacked a wider audience to share these conversations with outside of their friend groups in the past but the publication can fill that void.

"I think this publication is a chance to have interesting conversations and to put out to the community what you are passionate about in a format that really speaks to you. It memorializes what this moment at Middlebury might feel like for different students," board member Namaya Lemal '21.5 said. Our primary goal is to strengthen our community ties by helping understand one another better," Beese said.



# BEHIND THE BELLS

CARILLONNEUR GEORGE MATTHEW JR. PLAYS FOR PASSION AND PROTEST

SOPHIA MCDERMOTT-HUGHES

At 12:30 p.m. each day, the 48 bells suspended in Mead Chapel's tower ring out. The sounds of Irish folk songs, Baroque fugues and ragtime jigs echo across campus. The chapel's tower is a central landmark on campus, but its virtuoso remains an enigma to many. George Matthew Jr. has played the carillon — the set of bells suspended in the tower — for 59 years, 35 of them at Middlebury College. But his love for the instrument started long before that, more than 81 years ago.

In one of Matthew's first memories, he sat on his grandfather's shoulders, his head standing high above the crowd at the 1939 World's Fair in Queens, New York City. He had an unimpeded view of the carillon tower rising high above him. When the bells began to play so thunderously loud that they echoed in his head, he stared, enraptured. His four-year-old heart sang, and from that moment on, he was hooked.

Matthew comes from a family of musicians, but his early efforts to learn music were unsuccessful. At age seven, the magic struck when his parents bought him a mellophone, an instrument similar to the french horn. He played it for hours until his lips swelled up, and he was forced to take a break. He drove the neighbors crazy, so his parents banished him to the cellar, where the walls muffled his playing, and he could happily practice for as long as he liked.

Still, he dreamed of playing the big, booming organ that his father played at church. He started piano lessons at age nine and finally graduated to the organ at age 12. By age 13, he became the church organist, playing for his congregation every Sunday.

Matthew inherited his love of music from his father, but he never wanted Matthew to follow in his footsteps. He recalls his father telling him, "You won't make any money. You'll be unhappy, and you'll turn against yourself because your art won't be supporting you."

Matthew showed a natural aptitude for science, so he followed his father's advice and enrolled at Columbia University, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. Even as he committed himself to his studies, he never forgot about music or the carillon. Whenever he had breaks from classes, labs or other responsibilities, he would go outside to hear the great Belgian carillonneur Kamiel Lefevere play the 74-bell carillon at Riverside Church just four blocks away.

In 1963, Matthew finally got the opportunity to play the carillon during weekly lessons that he attended for a year. The experience was well worth the long wait and only fomented his love for the instrument. For the next five years, Matthew drove all over the northeast to play whenever and wherever could until the First

Presbyterian Church in Stamford, Connecticut hired him as their carillonneur in 1968.

Matthew continued to work as a chemical researcher for 15 years while simultaneously playing music at a series of churches and synagogues. In 1972, he was working upwards of 80 hours a week between his multiple jobs while studying for a master's degree in world music. He quit his job as a chemical researcher to dedicate himself to a career in music. "There was no use fighting it anymore," he said. "Music just took over my life."

In 1985, Allan Dragone, then the chair of Middlebury College's Board of Trustees, approached Matthew to help the college create their own carillon. Matthew helped expand the college's set of bells to a full-scale, four octave carillon that he has played for the last 35 years as the college's carillonneur.

When he's not playing the carillon at Middlebury College, Matthew is playing the organ for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in town or traveling around the country or the world to play elsewhere. He began his first carillon tour of the U.S. in 1979. Since then, he has traveled on 39 more tours in North America and 13 in Europe.

When Matthew plays, he hopes that his listeners understand his "emotional language." He recalls a woman approaching him after a carillon concert in Brussels, Belgium. She began speaking to him in Flemish, and a bystander translated. "You don't speak our language, but your hands speak our language," she said.

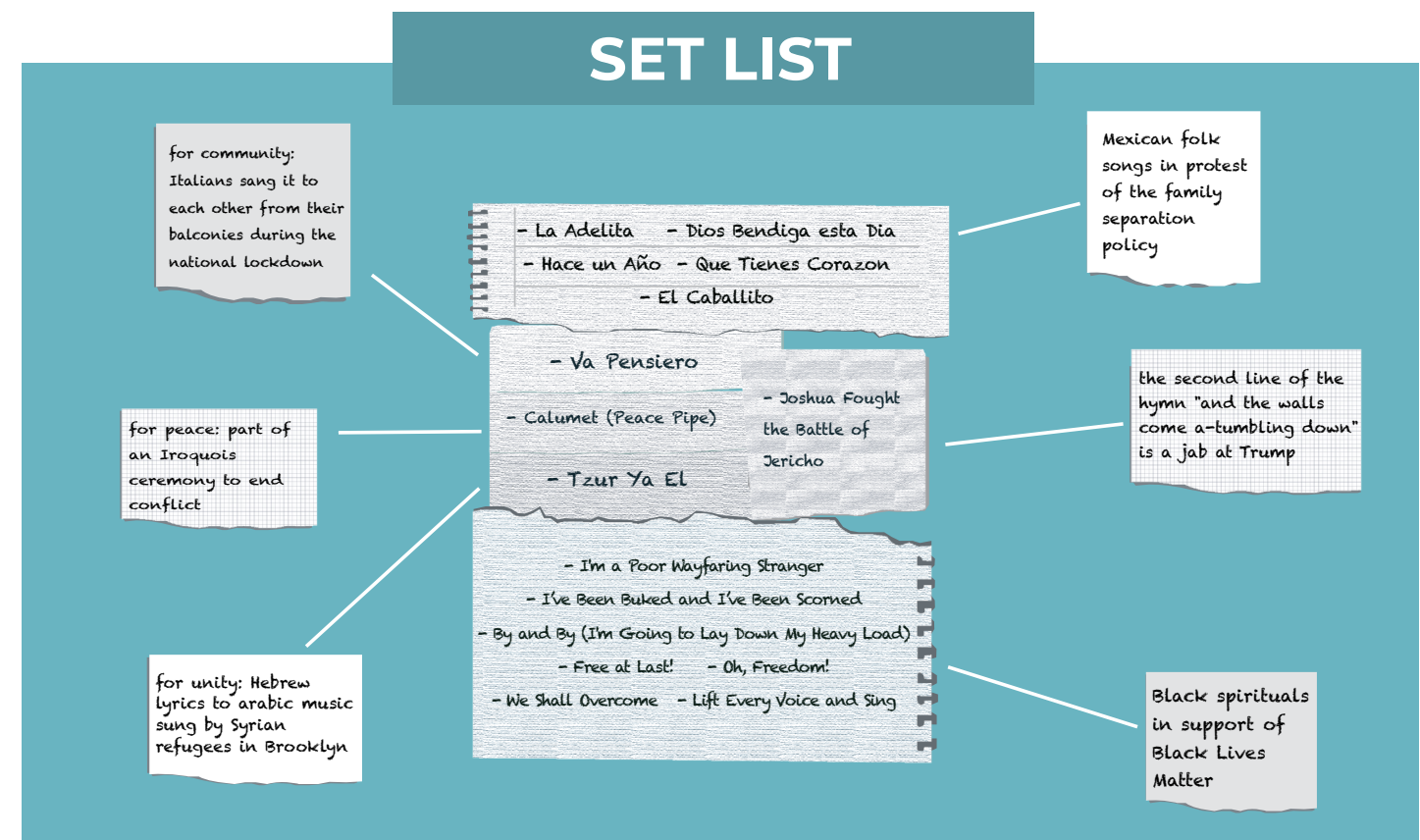
When Middlebury evacuated students from campus last March, he played the carillon for several hours each day

as students moved out. He interspersed Bach with the alma mater every 15 minutes to tell students, "We ain't beat yet, and we want you back."

When the college permitted Matthew to play again in mid-May, he returned to an empty campus. Matthew regards himself as serving Middlebury the town as much as the college, so he played every day to try to lift the town's spirits. As the pandemic continues, he frequently plays "Va, pensiero" from the opera Nabucco by Giuseppe Verdi, one of the songs that people across Italy sang to each other from their balconies during the national lockdown. He wanted to transmit that same spirit of community and hope to Middlebury.

He also uses the carillon for political messages. Matthew views the Trump administration's family separation policy as "one of the [greatest] crimes of this century." For the past two years, he has been playing Mexican folk songs every day as his own form of protest. He also frequently plays the spiritual "Joshua fought the Battle of Jericho," the second line of which is "and the walls come tumbling down" in defiance of Trump's "build a wall" rallying cry. After police killed George Floyd in May, Matthew began playing songs related to the Black Lives Matter Movement. "I'm hoping to just make people aware of this and pay tribute to the many millions of people who have gone through a pretty hellish experience," Matthew said.

Though already 85, Matthew has no plans to retire or stop playing — not until he "can't play decently anymore or Gabriel blows his horn, whichever comes first."





# SENIOR WEEK IN MARCH: COVID-19 TRUNCATES SENIORS' FINAL SEMESTER

JOYS AND TEARS CAME TWO MONTHS EARLY AS 2020 TURNED 2019.75



VAN BARTH

AMELIA POLLARD

On Tuesday, March 10, a leaked email announcing Middlebury's move to remote learning spread like wildfire across campus. Before most students could process the possibility of campus shutting down, a few seniors had already begun to organize an impromptu "senior week" of festivities to recognize this year's graduating class — one that would take place in mid-March, instead of May.

Within an hour, an event titled "SENIOR WEEK" had appeared on Facebook. "As responsible seniors, we have decided to take things into our own hands this week to ensure that we fulfill our seniorly duties before departing from Middlebury," read the Facebook event's description, penned by Tatum Braun '20.

Close to 500 Middlebury students — with nearly 600 seniors in the Class of 2020 — eventually joined the private event on Facebook. Braun had no idea it would get so big. "At that point, I just knew I wanted to make the last few days on campus count," she said, "especially since most of my friends are not returning to Middlebury in the fall."

Within the first six hours after the event's creation, 20 students had posted suggestions of events and places for the senior class to get together. One of the first posts pointed out that Two Brothers, a local tavern and bar, opened at 3 p.m., suggesting seniors meet there. By 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, the now-ubiquitous "2019.75" graduation year was used as a hashtag on the event page for the first time.

Senior events initially proved difficult to organize. Emotions and logistics collided with anxiety over the abrupt end of the semester. Yet by Wednesday, there were final a cappella concerts and seniors posting "crush lists" on the bulletin board outside Proctor dining hall. Traditions coalesced in their time-honored senior week form.

"The word of the week was 'processing,'" said Jack Litowitz '20, a senior and the treasurer of the Senior Committee. "It's hard to even feel sad or happy when you're in shock.

But despite that, we filled the week."

On Saturday morning, many seniors trekked to the football field to watch the sunrise — a time-honored senior week tradition. They held a flag that bore "2019.75" for photos.

In hindsight, some seniors fear that the turbulent week — filled with "high highs and low lows," according to Litowitz — may have flouted the CDC's recommendations of avoiding large gatherings.

Although the college has promised to re-evaluate the public health crisis in early April, many seniors fear they will not return this spring. Yet members of the Senior Committee — the eight seniors and two administrators responsible for events during students' final year at Middlebury — remain optimistic.

"Seeing so many schools out-right cancel graduation is making me grateful for Middlebury," Julia Sinton '20.5, one of the Committee members, said. "We're not a 30,000-person state school. That makes it possible to be a little more flexible in last-minute planning."

As of now, all of the college's reservations, catering bookings and plans for senior week remain intact. It is also possible that the originally planned week, slated for May 19–24, could be postponed. But members of the committee are also aware of how the situation is "in flux."

Until the Senior Committee receives the official word from President Laurie Patton that commencement cannot take place due to Covid-19, its members will continue to plan. "For now, it's business as usual," Litowitz said.

It's difficult to imagine a postponed celebration topping the collective spirit and ingenuity that characterized this month's improvised iteration. Seniors seized the fleeting week to celebrate the end of their truncated college career — all 3.75 years of it.

*Editor's Note: This article was originally published March 18, 2020.*

# AFTER LAST-MINUTE CANCELLATION, FEBS SWAP SNOW BOWL GRADUATION FOR STADIUM CELEBRATION



CATHERINE MCLAUGHLIN

CATHERINE MCLAUGHLIN

At their senior celebration, on-campus members of the class of 2020.5 donned beanies and parkas instead of caps and gowns. Sitting socially distanced on the sloped stands of Alumni Stadium, the super seniors' celebration bore little resemblance to the traditional ski (or sled) down the Snow Bowl. But, like many Covid-19-adapted events, their moment together was a cherished stand-in.

On Friday, Nov. 13, with caps and gowns still in the mail and another week of classes on campus remaining, Gov. Phil Scott announced that social gatherings would be restricted to members of the same household. A few hours later, the college announced similar restrictions on campus. But the Class of 2020.5 was determined to come together one last time. The restrictions would not take effect until 10 p.m. on Saturday, more than 24 hours after the announcement was made to students via email.

Class officers Julia Sinton '20.5 and Ben Slater '20.5 immediately hopped on Zoom and got to work. They coordinated with school administrators, the event management department and school health officials to expedite a version of the event. On the afternoon of Nov. 14, members of the Class of 2020.5 gathered at Alumni Stadium to celebrate the end of their Middlebury careers.

The original graduation, scheduled for the morning of Nov. 21, the final day on campus for students, would have included as many elements of a normal February graduation as possible. When students were informed on Thursday, Nov. 12 that a campus quarantine would begin the following day, Sinton was assured that the event would still be permitted. But on Friday, the state restricted events to only one household due to a statewide increase in Covid-19 cases, resulting in a last-minute cancellation of the event.

Sinton called her co-chair. He had not yet heard the news but immediately suggested that they "just do it tomorrow." Sinton was skeptical, but Slater was steadfast. He believed they could — and had to — try to

make it happen. School officials were doubtful that the logistical challenges of the proposal could be overcome, but Sinton said they were also sympathetic. "People really wanted it to happen for us," she said.

Mid-morning the next day, Sinton received a link to a Zoom invite. The celebration would take place. Sinton sent Facebook messages and emails to her classmates to tell people about the afternoon event, encouraging them to spread the word. The class of 2020.5 filed into Alumni Stadium, each receiving a tote bag filled with gifts including a blanket from the alumni association and a "Class of 2020.5" beanie.

From the turf below, President Patton greeted the students and introduced elected class speaker Annie Blalock '20.5 and Tom Sacco '20.5, who delivered a speech that weaved Sacco's witticisms with the main message of Blalock's own originally written remarks. Blalock noted the tumultuous four years her class had shared — from Charles Murray to the introduction of swipe-in dining — and joked that despite these events, "we still lacked the foresight and were ignorant enough to come back this semester amidst a pandemic and thought it would go well."

But, she continued, the community and unity of spirit among her class made it inevitable that they would join together on campus for their final term. "Feb-ness will help us deal with this chaotic garbage fire," she concluded, "and this chaotic garbage fire will be better for it." The celebration ended with Sean Kingston's "Fire Burning" blasting through the stadium's sound system. The super seniors began to dance.

Blalock described a reluctance in the air. "No one really wanted to accept that this was it, this was the reality," she said.

"It was an overwhelming feeling of like, 'wow, this is it,'" Sacco said of the end of the event. "Which quickly went away because it was like, 'I have homework to do.'"





# THE LAST FIVE DAYS\*

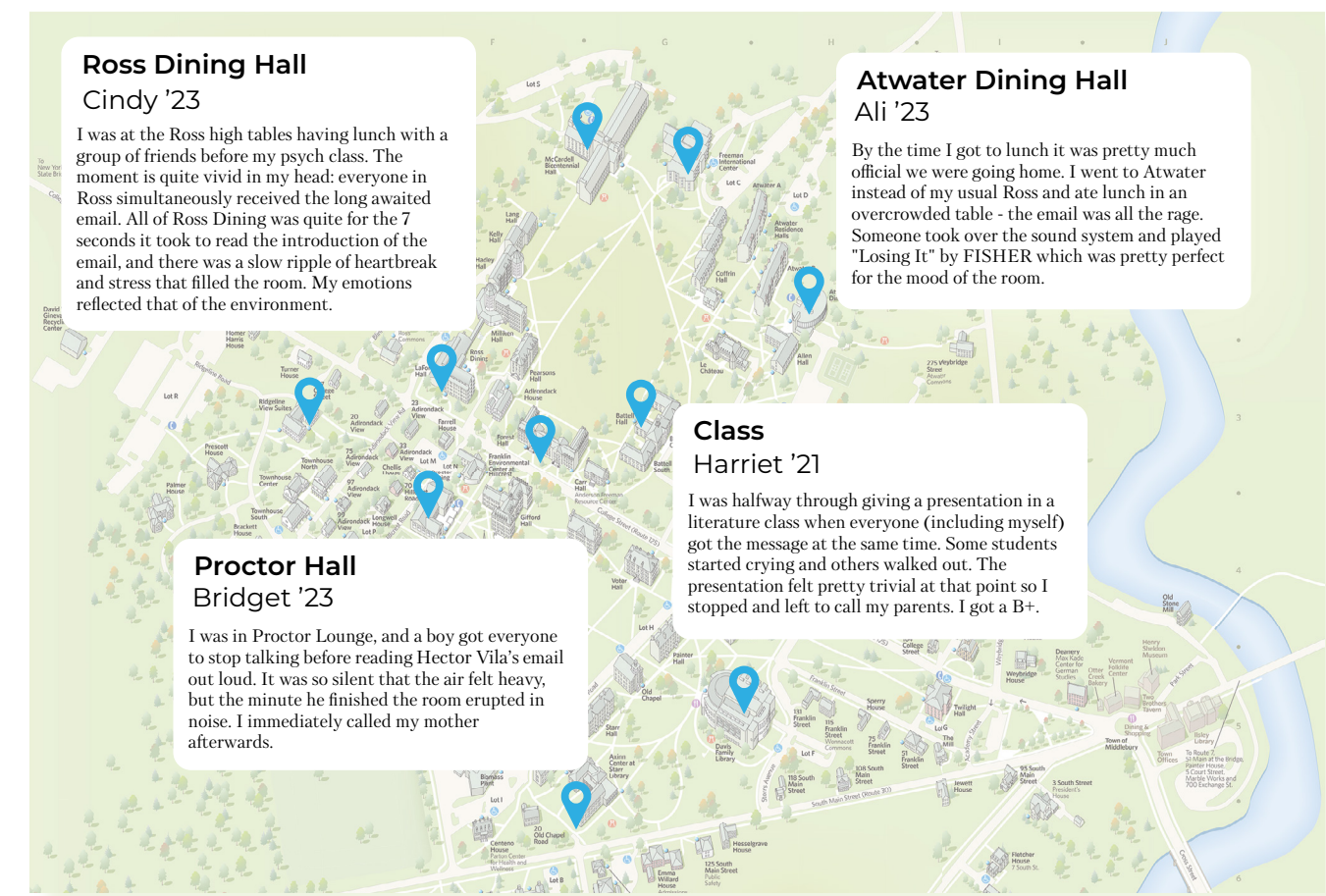
\*also known as ... March Madness, The End of The World, The Great Evacuation, The Apocalypse, Purgatory & The End of Days

BY CONSTANCE GOODING & DALEELAH SALEH

## Tuesday, March 10, 2020      Wednesday, March 10, 2021

The Office of the President sent an email to the student body emphasizing that “it [was] best to assume that the virus [would] eventually reach our own communities.” Students were told to be completely moved out of their dorms by 8 p.m., Friday, March 13. (Later that week, the date was changed to Sunday, March 15.) This news didn’t necessarily come as a surprise — an email containing similar information had been leaked just a few hours earlier. What’s more, other colleges across the country had already begun the process of suspending in-person classes. Despite this, shock and anxiety rippled across the community as we tried to come to terms with what can now only be described as the inevitable.

Retrospectively, March 10–15 marked the beginning of a turning point, both globally and locally. In a way, these last five days were a gift — we were given a chance to cling onto any semblance of normalcy before jumping into an entirely uncertain world ahead. One year later, we surveyed students that had been on campus, asking them where they were when they found out the news, how they spent their last five days, and what words and music they associated with this time. In doing so, we’ve attempted to create a time capsule to memorialize the whirlwind of emotions we experienced in those five unforgettable days — days that, for many of us, represent the end of our old normal.



Where were you when you found out?



Students across class years had similar thoughts, worries, priorities and perspectives. At the same time, each and every one of us experienced these last five days in a unique way. Here is a glance at what our lives were like, first-hand.

I went to most of my classes, because I felt like I could possibly learn information that could be helpful and tell me more about what would unravel in the future. I wanted to know any new information, theories about what would come and anything remotely positive."

—Amanda Frank '23



Students created a mutual aid spreadsheet so that students, faculty, staff, community members and parents could help each other manage the logistical and emotional hurdles surrounding the college's indefinite suspension of classes due to coronavirus.



There was this feeling for me last March of missing all these experiences and moments and feelings that I hadn't even had the opportunity yet to have. It felt like the losses were infinite in a way."

—Constance Gooding '23

I went to classes only to pay no attention, and spent every waking hour (most of my hours were waking) with friends."

—Bridget Uljan '23



Middlebury Discount Beverage saw customer sales increase to 50–60% higher than normal, according to store management. Owner Joe Cotroneo said he had never seen a sales spike like this in the 19 years he's been in charge of the store.

I attended parties and Wompzilla, which I remember feeling such a strong sense of communal happiness at. I also remember going on a car ride through Vermont with a couple friends, blasting music and singing at the top of our lungs like it was the end of the world."

— Emily Power '23



Faced with the sudden reality that their semesters would likely be ending, many Middlebury students spent their nights before the mandatory evacuation partying, drinking and vandalizing the campus and town in abundance.



Damage has included broken glass, stolen signs, strewn garbage, smashed furniture and windows, and items thrown into trees. Facilities staff spent the weekend cleaning up messes across campus. One worker said he has seen fans and microwaves thrown out of windows, and that at least 10 to 15 soap dispensers have been ripped off the walls and smashed in residential halls.



I worried about how removed I was feeling from everything, hoping I would be able to stay involved with everything while far away. But beneath it all, even despite my negativity, I felt relieved. There had been times when pre-pandemic Midd inspired and motivated me, but I had also felt out of place in some elements of pre-pandemic Midd culture. I knew that time away would help me become more confident and resilient as a person.”

—Colin Lyman '23



I think I went to only one class during those last few days. I didn’t even get to spend time with friends; the whole time was spent scavenging for boxes to get packed and trying to figure out how to uproot my whole life at Midd to transition to a totally uncertain, scary place back home in NYC.

—Anonymous

I don’t have any regrets about how I spent that last week. I had a semester’s worth of beautiful experiences in such a short time that left me both confident of my place in the community and heartbroken to be leaving a place that was just starting to feel like home.”

—Andrew Grossman '23.5

**In retrospect, how would you describe the last five days?**

*surreal stressful chaotic sad emotional overwhelming panicked hectic uninformed  
uncertain important anxious sorrowful fleeting bittersweet shocking  
scary apocalyptic confusing absurd doubtful energetic cathartic heartbreaking  
crazy memorable bizarre dystopian sentimental distressing spontaneous  
unforgettable alarming uniting shifting sudden*



I tried to finish as much of my Middlebury bucket list as I could (i.e. watched the sunrise on my final morning, finished my Proc crush list along with some other things I had on my bucket list). I tried to spend as much time as I could with my friends and teammates, did a lot of crying and dancing and tried to go to some of my classes in between packing up my life and also fitting in the last two months of my senior year and senior week celebrations into five days.”

—Marisa Edmondson '20

I went to my classes. I went to parties and to long meals in the dining hall. I spent time with friends and also acquaintances. I went to final concerts and performances. I hiked Snake Mountain for the first time and had my last radio show. I saw the sunrise.”

—Cara Levine '20



**A Playlist for the End of the World**

*We asked students what was in their headphones (and blasting at parties) for the last five days.*

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ▶ <b>I Miss You</b> <i>Blink-182</i>  | ▶ <b>Sad Day</b> <i>FKA Twigs</i>         |
| ▶ <b>Tongue Tied</b> <i>Grouplove</i> | ▶ <b>Good News</b> <i>Mac Miller</i>      |
| ▶ <b>Like a Prayer</b> <i>Madonna</i> | ▶ <b>This City</b> <i>Sam Fischer</i>     |
| ▶ <b>Cyanide</b> <i>Daniel Caesar</i> | ▶ <b>Piano Man</b> <i>Billy Joel</i>      |
| ▶ <b>Losing It</b> <i>Fisher</i>      | ▶ <b>This Life</b> <i>Vampire Weekend</i> |







## Reflections on love, relationships and intentional connections at Middlebury

BY EMMANUEL TAMRAT

It's been a tough year. After being evacuated from campus last spring, we had to finish the semester from bedrooms and dining room tables instead of Davis Library carrels. Stability was no longer a given as our lives seemingly changed on a daily basis. But something remained constant: our love for one another.

For many of us, this newfound alone time has prompted us to reflect on moments at Middlebury when we felt loved and cared for. The moments that we took for granted — power breakfasts in Atwater, small gestures of kindness and impromptu deep conversations — are now some of our most cherished ones.

We've also adapted creatively in finding new ways to safely maintain close relationships with those important to us and create more moments to cherish, from finding a new favorite hang-out spot to taking a late-night walk at the Knoll.

Here's a short collection of stories about love at Middlebury throughout the past year, from random acts of kindness to a new take on Proc crush lists and proof that romance isn't dead. As you read them and reminisce on past expressions of love, we hope these stories bring you joy and inspiration for the semester to come.

## WHAT IS LOVE (AT MIDDLEBURY)?

SEX PANTHER

The more I reflect on my four years at Middlebury, the more I am overwhelmed by how much love I felt for my friends and how loved by them I felt in return. I reached out to a few senior friends and asked them to answer a couple questions: how they defined love at Middlebury, if there was anything they wish they had realized sooner or done differently with regard to love during college, and when they felt most loved at Middlebury.

When I reflect on those questions, I always gravitate towards two moments. The first was during the last week of my junior fall, when I was living in Palmer. One night, my friends congregated in the suite across the hall from ours, about 15 people were seated around the room in a loose circle, on the floor, on top of desks and on chairs we had crammed into the suite. One friend, splayed on one of the room's two twin beds and with a beer in his hand, was receiving a stick-and-poke on the back of his calf. Conversation zipped by and around me as I sat on a lofted bed, next to a best friend and a more-than-a-friend. I felt like I was being held in place by the threads that wove around the room, in between people, across my lap and through my two shoulders. It was quintessentially, even obscenely college-esque; still, it remains one of the best nights from the last four years.

The second moment that comes to mind is from the last week of my senior year. On Wednesday, the day following the announcement of our untimely departure from campus, my friends and I rallied for a 4 p.m. Mad Taco salute. Over margaritas and overpriced but decent Mexican food, my six closest friends and I tried to come to terms with what it meant to say goodbye to Middlebury, well before any of us felt ready to leave it behind. When I asked everyone to remember when at Midd they had laughed the hardest, we were left in hysterics remembering all of the famous and infamous moments of pure, belly-shaking, tear-inducing laughter we'd had over the years. Someone once observed that my friends and I are always laughing; until then, though, I never realized just how apt that description was. Right

then, as we felt our collective chapter at Middlebury closing, I felt unmistakably, completely loved. That moment with my friends is one of hundreds that I can think of where I felt completely loved, but this one just happens to be my favorite memory of a chapter closing.

If nothing else, college helped me understand how I love. I guess that is how I define love at Middlebury: putting aside your time and stress to take a moment to care for someone else, whether that is making them a cookie or just taking the time to be quiet and present together. In my experience, I have felt the most love in quiet, routine moments: mornings in bed with someone, homework in the library, rambunctious lunches in Atwater and prolonged dinners on the Proctor terrace. I wish I had realized sooner that these small moments of love would be what I would carry with me after I left Middlebury, but I am so grateful to always carry them with me.

Without further ado, here is how people responded to my prompts. When asked how they define love at Midd, they answered:

*For me, love at Middlebury is defined by my incredibly kind, smart, funny, thoughtful, perceptive closest friends who, after four years, are like an extension of myself. I wish everyone at Midd the same deep-rooted, immutable happiness of knowing, beyond all doubt, that you've found your people. I still can't really believe that we all ended up here together — what are the odds? That infamous Middlebury statistic proved true for me: here, I found my soulmates.*

*I define love at Middlebury the same way I define it everywhere: an intangible sentiment that draws us to people indefinitely in both romantic and platonic contexts.*

*A meaningful and fulfilling connection between two people that allows each individual to bring out the*



best in themselves. In essence, love is when two (or potentially more) people come together and are more than just the sum of their parts.

When asked what they wished they had done differently or realized sooner, they answered:

*At several points, I remember saying to friends, “There’s just no one left here that I’d be interested in dating.” Of course, that never turned out to be true, and a week or two later I’d meet someone great who I never knew existed. I wish I had had more faith in the dating pool at Middlebury. It’s a cliché, but when it feels like you’ve exhausted your options, do try to keep an open mind— you truly never know who you’ll hit it off with.*

♥♥ **IN MY EXPERIENCE, I HAVE FELT THE MOST LOVE IN QUIET, ROUTINE MOMENTS: MORNINGS IN BED WITH SOMEONE, HOMEWORK IN THE LIBRARY, RAMBUNCTIOUS LUNCHES IN ATWATER AND PROLONGED DINNERS ON THE PROCTOR TERRACE.”**

*I was single for a lot of Middlebury and for some reason I always felt this kind of guilt. I knew hookup culture wasn’t ideal, but I always felt bad for getting into brief one-to-two month relationships, only to bail out before it got really serious. Now that I’m really happy in a relationship, I see how stupid that mentality was; unless things really feel right, it’s pointless to feel guilty about not wanting to commit to something, as long as you communicate with the “other” partners ahead of time.*

*I wish I hadn’t felt so rushed to find a long-term romantic partner. This had little to do with Middlebury itself, but I came into college on the back of a long-term relationship, and the only kind of relationship I was interested in was one where I could fill that deep void I had for a very close romantic partner. I think I missed a lot of the growth and learning associated with more casual dating and romantic encounters,*

*and I wish looking back I hadn’t been so concerned with something you ultimately cannot force. It either happens or it doesn’t, and I shouldn’t have been so caught up in it all.*

When asked about when they felt the most loved at Middlebury, they responded:

*One friend would make me soup whenever she noticed I was sad. There is no sadness that cannot be eased (at least in part) by a cup of hot, homemade soup.*

*I think it was after I went to Nationals this senior year, and all my friends were hitting me with a slew of supporting messages, asking me how it went. It showed me how much they care and it hit me in a really special place.*

*The moment I felt most loved at Middlebury, though there have been many other instances where I’ve felt loved as well, was on a day of no particular importance. I had been feeling a bit down on my luck for a variety of reasons, and I had gotten through the week just putting my head down, not saying anything to anyone else, and keeping all that sadness to myself. I didn’t think anyone would really notice, but that Friday morning when I walked into the dining hall, someone had thought to bake me a batch of cookies because they thought it would be a pleasant surprise and make me happy. I highly doubt they knew I was having a rough week, but the reminder that there are people out there, and especially my friends, who do genuinely care about me, changed my entire week. Sometimes it’s the smallest acts of kindness that go the furthest. I still have the ribbon that tied that bag of cookies shut to this day.*

—  
*Editor’s Note: Sex Panther is an anonymous column published in The Campus. This article was originally published in the April 2020 Love Issue.*

## MASK OFF, MIDD: COMMITMENT AND CHILL?

MARIA KAOURIS

I have such a spectacular talent for making a fool of myself that, when it happens, I’m hardly surprised anymore.

Take, for example, the dashing Scottish server at Molly Malone’s Irish pub who definitely — and I mean definitely — was not into me. Egged on by my friends to flirt with him (bad idea), I botched my order, which contained slivered almonds, and ended up rambling on to the poor lad about nuts for upwards of 15 seconds (“cashews, walnuts, macadamia...”). Unsure if my nut-related comment was a sexual advance, the server gaped at me and said, “Um, so, like... do you still want that salad?” To which I replied that, yes, Frasier, I most definitely still want that salad, after which point he walked away wordlessly and refused to make eye contact for the rest of the meal.

You’d think that with the pandemic, I’d have fewer — rather than more — opportunities to put my foot in my mouth, but I never cease to amaze myself. Last October, I went out to coffee with a guy I liked and, in a series of unfortunate events, ran into his friend — with whom I had gone to lunch the week before (pro tip: don’t go to Otter Creek Bakery unless you’re ready to go public). That night, losing sleep over my faux pas, I reminded myself that at least I’m consistent — albeit consistently awkward (I did not end up with either guy).

While Middlebury’s social life has been defined by a dominant hit-it-and-quit-it mentality, I have found myself on a remarkable number of dates with too many awkward stories to boot (see above). Sure, I’ve had my share of dance floor makeouts (cheers to men’s hockey, am I right?), but that phase lost its thrill the moment I

got mono. Armed with a burgeoning fear of germs and a waning zeal for “wanna hang?” texts, I tapped out of casual romance when I realized that many of the guys I was spending time with cared little about getting to know me (and, trust me, I’m worth getting to know).

Since then, I have approached romance with more intention.

Curious about what sober interactions at Midd looked like, I began to tell guys what I was looking for. I had dated around while abroad in fall 2019 and returned with a newfound self-assurance, one that motivated me to pursue authentic connection rather than accept a relationship I found unsatisfying. Until that point, I had been so concerned that I would never find romance at Midd unless I was willing to be casual.

A lot of guys ran away from me. Like, I-wouldn’t-touch-her-with-a-ten-foot-pole vibes.

But others, either looking for something similar or just... curious, started to trickle into my life (this is not because of my stunning looks or unparalleled personality, but rather because interested guys didn’t have to guess what I wanted — I just told them).

Interestingly, I’ve found that Midd’s romantic landscape amid the pandemic has been receptive, if not inviting, of this alternative to hook-up culture. Sure, those who want to be casual are going to be casual (there is always a market for romance sans commitment), but the pandemic has made relationships — the full-blown kind — far more palatable. For the first time, students have been forced away from the drunken parties they usually rely on to connect with each other. Now, you no longer



need to play the game (i.e. hook-up culture) if you want someone to cuddle.

On top of this, we now have health obligations to our roommates, suitemates and close contacts. Especially when we were still finding our footing with Covid-19 protocol and positive cases, it was far more acceptable to ask your crush to go on a Knoll walk than send a “u up?” text. (Now, perhaps the latter is risky because you don’t know your love interest’s comfort with Covid-19 protocol.)

♥♥ **FOR THE FIRST TIME, STUDENTS HAVE BEEN FORCED AWAY FROM THE DRUNKEN PARTIES THEY USUALLY RELY ON TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER. NOW, YOU NO LONGER NEED TO PLAY THE GAME (I.E. HOOK-UP CULTURE) IF YOU WANT SOMEONE TO CUDDLE.”**

MARIA KAOURIS '21

Despite being the self-proclaimed single gal of my friend group — I could never quite find someone who matched my energy before — I settled down this past semester with a lovely guy who accepts, if not welcomes, my overwhelming affection for sloths and black coffee (note

to him: don’t get too comfortable... there’s always room for improvement).

Our first interaction entailed grabbing a meal together at Ross, which materialized from a sober-text. Had it not been for the pandemic, we probably would’ve met in a less intimate setting (perhaps a pregame or party), had a drunken conversation, and been more inclined to reach out on Friday and Saturday nights, when rejection stings less. When we decided to date, we never had to cross the threshold from booty calls to boyfriend/girlfriend — we were, simply, a natural couple.

And so, my greatest realization has been that, especially with Covid-19, there is no set romantic landscape in college; by no means have relationships of convenience disappeared. But with fewer parties, their waning accessibility has created space for alternative forms of connection and a realization that maybe we don’t have to be so drunk to find romance.

MASK OFF, MIDD: For the first time, we have options.

*Editor’s Note: MASK OFF, MIDD is a column that explores romance at Middlebury during the era of Covid by Maria Kaouris '21. Turn to **page 106** to read more MASK OFF, MIDD.*

# MIDD MISSED CONNECTIONS IS THE NEW PROC CRUSH

EMMANUEL TAMRAT

“What if we kissed on battel beach?” reads the bio of Middlebury Missed Connections (@middmissedconnections), the fun and light-hearted platform for students to publicly — and anonymously — reveal their secret crushes. Making its debut shortly after the traumatic evacuation from campus and forced transition to remote learning, the page has posted 267 submissions and garnered over 1,200 followers since its debut last July.

At a time when many aspects of campus culture have been impacted by Covid-19, Middlebury Missed Connections serves as a digital version of one of the college’s most timeless traditions: the Proc Crush list.

While not as eye-catching as an assortment of large posters pinned to the wall in Proctor, the account allows

♥♥ ***I can’t middlebury my feelings for you anymore.”***

users to anonymously confess their secret crush, try a cheesy pick-up line or simply express their affection for a special someone. Set against bright pastel shades of pink and red, artfully crafted submissions are paired with equally witty captions written by the page managers.

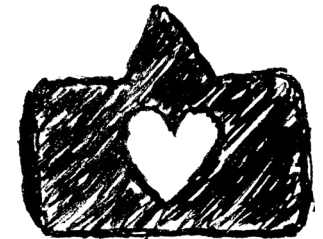
Submitters remain anonymous and the name of the admired person is concealed to varying degrees, creating an aura of mystery. Some submissions include references to specific moments or locations, while others mention specific classes, sports teams or student organizations.

Other submissions express a longing for in-person connection as virtual lectures and meetings have become

♥♥ ***To Ohio, you cute or w.e. 🥰 We should bang out sometime***

commonplace. One person found themselves love-struck by a pair of “stormy” eyes visible through a small box in a Zoom window.

“Distracted during my economics zoom, I still long to see your face in a real room. Lost in your stormy eyes, will



this be my demise? Join me in micro where a romance can bloom.”

Some posts reminisce about missed connections at parties in Tavern and Atwater. But with large gatherings mostly non-existent this year, several posts instead tell stories of fleeting attraction in Proctor dining hall, known for its perennial warmth, intimate atmosphere and early opening times for dinner.

♥♥ ***If we make eye contact in proc, why are you staring back ●● 🙄? Lmk. Should’ve dropped something so you could pick it up and the rest would be history.”***

Proctor is mentioned in more posts than any other dining hall. The submission form also keeps up the friendly rivalry between dining halls: it allows users to rank on-campus dining halls based on how acceptable they are as a first date location.

Per their Q&A, the moderators’ favorite dining hall is Mead Chapel. But if you’re hoping to become the subject of a missed connection, then going to Proctor is a safe bet.

*\* According to The Campus’ 2019 Zeitgeist survey, a plurality of students (nearly 40%) consider Proctor their favorite dining hall.*

*Emmanuel Tamrat is a member of the Class of 2022 and the Senior Online Editor of The Campus.*



EMMANUEL TAMRAT





# SAME STORM, DIFFERENT BOATS

BY ELSA KORPI  
ILLUSTRATED BY MIISHA POKLAD

Only weeks into the suddenly reformed online semester, a petition emerged to make all spring classes pass/fail. In a matter of days, The Campus' opinion section was overwhelmed with letters to the point that the board made the rare decision to suspend op-eds on the topic altogether.

On both sides of the argument stood one central question. Last March pushed students from the level playing field of the college campus into sometimes vastly different home environments, family situations and a whirlwind of other stresses. What, now, was the best way to make the semester as equal as possible? Authors of the original petition argued that an opt-in system would unfairly disadvantage students whose home conditions made it impossible for them to place their academics first. In contrast, some op-eds submitted to The Campus posited that good grades were a way for even the most disadvantaged students to set themselves apart. The community found itself in midst of a debate on the most foundational values of Middlebury as an institution.

In a faculty vote in April 2020, the college ended the spring semester with an opt-in pass/fail system and debate on the issue stopped. Yet the ruinous forces of the pandemic reached far beyond finals week.

In these pages, The Campus has compiled documentation from along the way of just how detrimental the pandemic has been. Its accounts – some quantitative, some anecdotal – serve as views of the boats from which members of our community have weathered this storm.







## FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

Socioeconomic status was at the center of the grading debate for good reason. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, U.S. unemployment had hit a record 14.8% by April 2020. Women of color and those without a college degree were disproportionately affected by the recession.

Concurrently, America's wealthiest 1% only grew its wealth. As Tesla stocks boomed, Elon Musk got \$180 billion richer in 2020 alone, surpassing Jeff Bezos as the richest man on earth. Elsewhere in America, eviction moratoriums and stimulus checks remained at the center of policy debate.

As the spring semester ended remotely, a Campus student survey reported that more than 100 students

found needing to make money while living at home as being at least somewhat of an obstacle to their learning, and 34 students reported lacking a home as a significant obstacle.

As the community awaited an announcement on the fall semester plan, questions about tuition and financial aid plagued many.

After arriving on campus, some students questioned whether the college's zero-tolerance Covid-19 policies would take into account the breadth and challenges of students' socioeconomic situations. The recession was on the minds of the incoming class, too, as Dean of Admissions Nicole Curvin identified pandemic-induced economic hardship as a "major consideration of incoming domestic students."

**I AM CONCERNED THAT THE COLLEGE WILL HOLD FINANCIAL AID OVER STUDENTS' HEADS TO PREVENT THEM FROM WITHDRAWING FROM THE SEMESTER IF IT IS ALL REMOTE.**

MAY 2020 CAMPUS  
STUDENT SURVEY

**MOTHER LOST HER JOB, FATHER MIGHT TOO. HAVING EVERYONE UNDER THE SAME ROOF IN A SMALL HOUSE HAS DRIVEN MY PARENTS TO THE BRINK OF DIVORCE.**

MAY 2020 CAMPUS  
STUDENT SURVEY

## SPACE AND DISTANCE

"Stay home" and "flatten the curve" quickly joined the public lexicon as the world shut down in an effort to slow the spread of the virus. The spring semester continued virtually in makeshift workspaces and childhood bedrooms, kitchen tables and cluttered apartments. The arrangement proved to be stressful for many.

Travel in and out of the United States faced sweeping restrictions in mid-March and into the summer. President Trump announced a ban on incoming flights from Europe hours after the college published its evacuation plan, while a nationwide travel ban from China had been in effect since Jan. 31, 2020.

Domestic and international students alike struggled to obtain permission to stay on campus. The Campus reported in late March that the college had been stringent in its procedures, reserving these spots only for those whom it deemed to be in situations of unusual hardship.

The sudden shift away from the Vermont campus posed a unique challenge to students not on Eastern Standard Time. For example, a Chinese international student – the largest international student group at Middlebury, and nationally – found that their afternoon lecture now took place in the early hours of the morning.

Travel difficulties continued as the fall semester approached. Still subject to sweeping travel restrictions, the return to Vermont posed a logistical challenge to international students from China, Brazil, Iran and the European Union. While the Trump administration in July extended a National Interest Exemption to student visa holders from Schengen countries, such concessions did not extend to all members of Middlebury's international student body. While some opted for semesters in their home countries, others circumvented the U.S. travel ban through 14-day quarantines in places like Mexico City.

**FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, I HAVE SPOKEN TO STUDENTS (SOME IN MY CLASS, SOME NOT) DEALING WITH ALL MANNERS OF CHALLENGES. ONE IS WORKING 25 HOURS A WEEK TO HELP PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILY GIVEN THE ECONOMIC UPHEAVAL. ONE IS IN A TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT, SHARING A ROOM WITH A PARENT WITH LITTLE TO NO PRIVACY, NO SEPARATE WORKSPACE AND ADDED FAMILIAL BURDENS. GIVING THOSE STUDENTS LETTER GRADES WITH ANYTHING RESEMBLING THE SAME CRITERIA AS THOSE WHO HAVE A SEPARATE WORKSPACE, THEIR OWN ROOM, ECONOMIC SECURITY AND A STABLE FAMILY SITUATION SEEMS SHAMBOLIC.**

PROFESSOR KEMI FUENTES-GEORGE  
IN "LET'S TAKE GRADES OFF THEIR PEDESTAL"





HEALTH & BODY

The Campus reported late in the spring that 64% of survey respondents had experienced mental health-related challenges during the semester, with over a quarter not knowing where to access care. According to the survey, students reported high levels of stress about the uncertainty of life during the pandemic, jobs, relationships, academics, family life and home life. For many, multiple challenges intersected to create unique obstacles to tackling remote learning from home. Mental health issues emerged as a stark trend in The Campus’ survey at the end of the fall 2020 semester, with three quarters of respondents describing their mental health as worse than usual. Uncertain futures, academic work and relationships were identified as the three biggest stressors. According to the survey results, nearly one in 10 respondents reported having intrusive thoughts about suicide.

What The Campus’ survey did not capture as effectively are health disparities between ethnic groups – the overwhelming majority of respondents were white. According to a December 2020 report by the Center for Disease Control, Indigenous, Black and Hispanic communities are disproportionately represented in both U.S. Covid-19 deaths and hospitalizations. As of Jan. 21, 2021, the Biden administration has established a Health Equity Task Force within the Department of Health and Human Services whose mission is to address data shortfalls and access issues which have “further hampered efforts to ensure an equitable pandemic response.”

ONE CHALLENGE THAT I HAVE FACED HAS BEEN LESS MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS MYSELF, BUT MORE CARING FOR FAMILY MEMBERS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

MAY 2020 CAMPUS STUDENT SURVEY

BEING HOME MEANS THAT I HAVE TO STEP UP IN MY FAMILY, AND THAT INVOLVES HOME-SCHOOLING AND HELPING TO RAISE AN 11-YEAR-OLD GIRL AND A SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY. IT HAS ALSO MEANT CARING FOR MY FATHER WHO HAS EARLY-ONSET ALZHEIMER’S. THE PLAYING FIELD IS EXTREMELY UNEQUAL WHEN SCHOOL IS REMOTE.

MAY 2020 CAMPUS STUDENT SURVEY

AS AN IMMUNOCOMPROMISED STUDENT I AM VERY SCARED OF WHAT LIFE BACK AT MIDDLEBURY WOULD LOOK LIKE, YET ALSO DO NOT WANT TO GIVE UP THE REST OF MY COLLEGE YEARS.

MAY 2020 CAMPUS STUDENT SURVEY

WHAT NOW?

Almost a year after dialogue on institutional inequalities gained traction, student organizers now call for increased transparency and receptiveness to faculty and student voices.

“We know that our community can be productive in asking for changes and none of these issues are new; they’re just being pushed to their breaking point right now. Middlebury hasn’t always been receptive to the activist movements we see on this campus but we have the responsibility to take care of our community and it’s important to hear and respond to these needs,” said Chloe Fleischer ’21.5, a student activist and one of the leading organizers behind FairGradesMidd in Spring 2020.

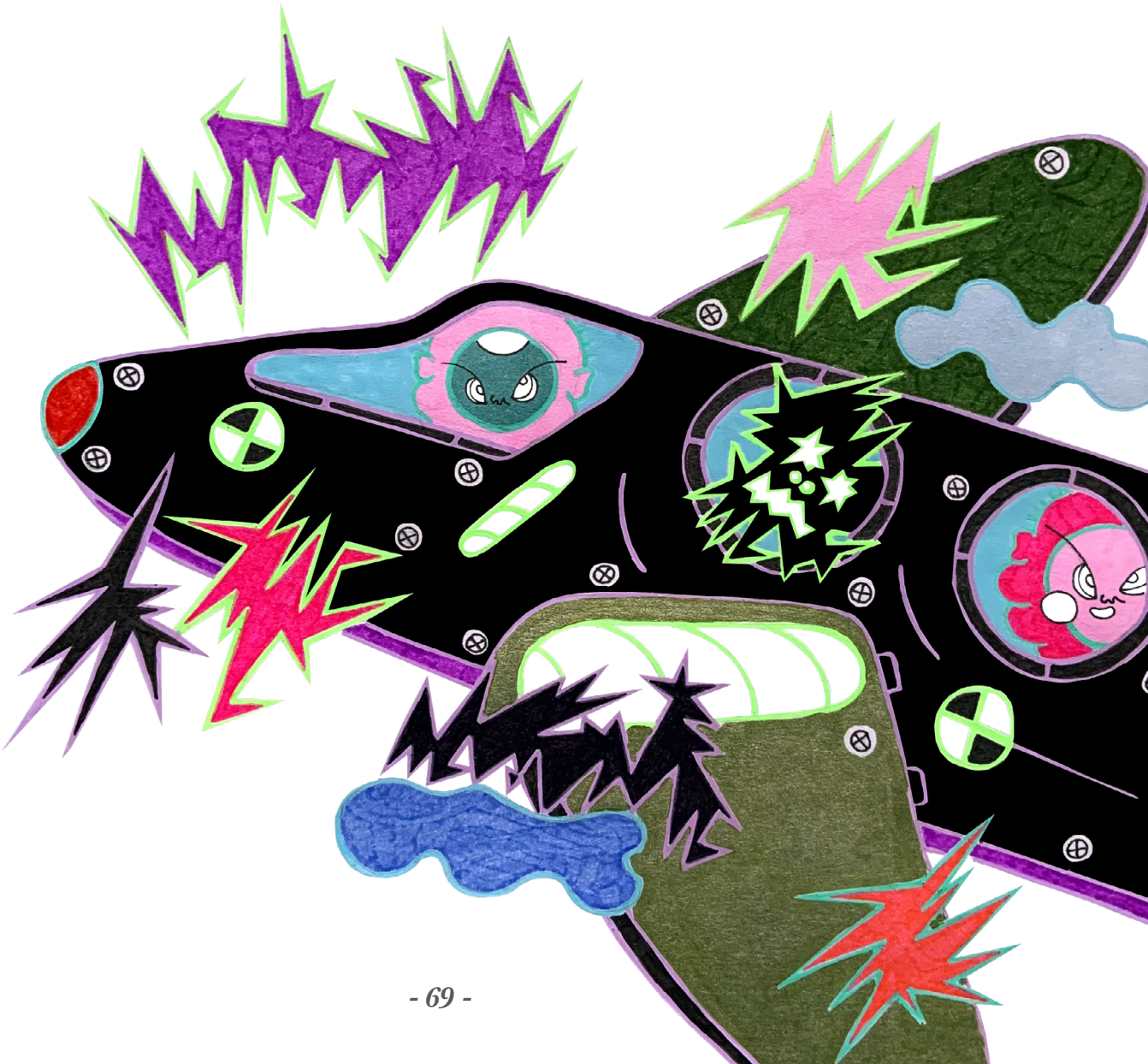
Fellow FairGrades organizer Arthur Martins ’22.5 echoed Fleischer’s sentiment, adding that addressing inequalities requires self-reflection from students, too. “We must as students – and as an institution – confront the fact that we do not live in the liberal utopia that is sometimes construed on campus,” Martins said.

“Moving forward, it’s important we let go of these fantasies and face the privileges and divides that cement the many inequalities in our college. This is essential to create the momentum and unity necessary to pressure the administration into change.”

“NONE OF THESE ISSUES ARE NEW; THEY’RE JUST BEING PUSHED TO THEIR BREAKING POINT RIGHT NOW.”

CHLOE FLEISCHER ’21.5

In line with a recent campaign for the college to “open the books,” Fleischer also underscored the need for financial transparency moving forward. “So long as we’re unclear on the breakdown of what is spent on luxuries versus necessities, it’s hard to know definitively how Middlebury must improve its pandemic response.”



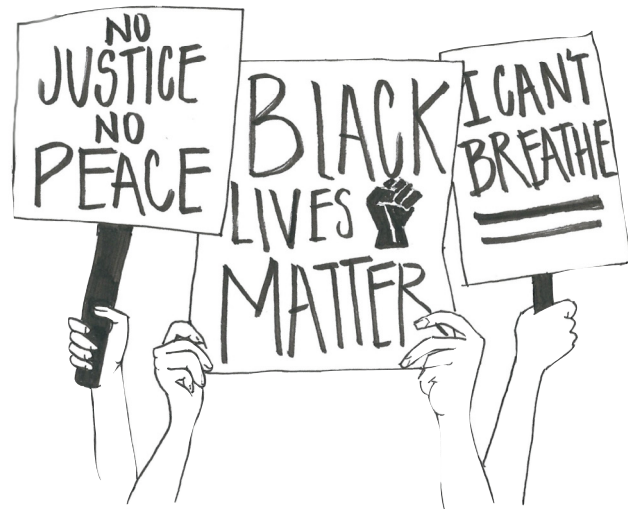


# STORIES FROM THE FIGHT FOR BLACK LIVES AND RACIAL JUSTICE

BY ABIGAIL CHANG

On May 30, roughly 375 people gathered by Middlebury's College Park and Cross Street. They had assembled for a vigil for George Floyd, who had died five days prior when a Minneapolis police officer kept his knee on Floyd's neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. Floyd's murder brought grief and anger about the country's history of violence against Black communities and Black bodies to a head. Protests sprung up across the nation, and many began to call for reform.

In Vermont, residents and students pushed for change. The Campus reported on a May 30 protest in Burlington, in which attendees marched toward the city's police department. A second vigil in Middlebury drew an even larger crowd with 500 attendees. We reported on the students who joined protests across the country and wrote about a Middlebury junior founded an organization to feed protestors in his community. In September, when a grand jury failed to charge the officers involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor with her death, students organized a protest and marched from campus into town.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIANNA BEACH



But this year has also reaffirmed that Middlebury is far from impervious to racism on its own campus. Over the summer, an email from a departing professor detailing the racism she experienced at the college was widely circulated via email and social media, calling out individual professors and administrators for the harm they had perpetrated. On the evening of the protest of the grand jury verdict, one student was the target of a racial slur, and another was harassed by a local resident outside of his campus residence.

Numerous student groups have called for action on racial justice on campus, and the college administration has created a 37-page action plan among other steps to combat racism and inequities at the college. We checked in with some of the students who called upon the administration to act, finding that the college has made progress toward many of their demands but that much work is still ahead. We share some of these stories in the pages that follow.



Protesters have taken to the streets across the country in a national outcry against the death of George Floyd — and other Black Americans — at the hands of police. Middlebury students past and present stood at the center of many of these protests, organizing both in person and virtually to stand against police brutality and systemic racism.

For many, the recent police violence struck close to home.

“When I saw George Floyd on the ground, I wasn’t just seeing George Floyd,” said Angelina Gomes ’23, who has attended several protests in her home city of Boston. “I was seeing a Black body. I have a Black body. My brother has a Black body. My mom has a Black body. My boyfriend has a Black Body. I see these people as well.”

Based in New York City, Lazaro Galvez ’23 had already attended his fourth protest of the week when he spoke to The Campus on June 6. While protesting together on May 30, one of his friends was maced directly in the face by a police officer for allegedly getting too close to a police van. Galvez, who was standing directly beside him, dropped everything to pour water in his eyes and wipe him down.

The week has been very emotional for Galvez, who said he has repeatedly cried alone in his room. As a “white-passing Latino” growing up just outside of Harlem surrounded by Black and Brown friends, Galvez has spent the week in a near constant state of fear that his friends will attend a protest and not come back.

Maddy Stutt ’21.5 spoke with a voice hoarse from shouting chants at the many protests she has attended in New York City. She views it as her moral obligation to attend as many protests as possible. While the crowds have remained largely peaceful, Stutt said that police have not.

“Every time I’ve been afraid or things have escalated it

was because of the cops,” she said.

She winced while recounting how police deployed a sonic cannon on her and other dispersing protesters in New York City on Wednesday night, an experience she described as extremely painful and scary. The day before, a group of agitators followed the protesters, including Stutt. They jogged alongside the crowd, shouting racist and homophobic slurs and shoving Black men in an effort to raise tensions and incite violence, according to Stutt. As police presence increased, she and other White protesters linked arms to provide a barrier between Black and Brown protesters and police. One of the agitators stood behind the police line hurling more slurs and pushing those around Stutt to try and break through. She said the police not only failed to intervene, but many looked amused and nodded in support of the agitator.

Police presence has also increased the risk of spreading Covid-19. While all of the students interviewed said that protesters had been trying to carefully manage risk by social distancing and wearing masks, several recounted incidents in which fleeing from police forced them to ignore these measures.

Kai Velazquez ’23 helped hoist people over a fence after police left them no other escape route, coming in direct contact with other protesters. The use of tear gas and other chemicals forces people to cough, increasing the potential to spread the virus, according to Sabrina Wang ’19.

Despite the risks, many are still committed to attending as many protests as possible.

“Injustice doesn’t have a schedule. This is not a moment where we have the option to not speak up and not say something about it,” Ian Blow ’19 said. “Yes Covid-19 cases will rise, but that doesn’t invalidate how important it is that these protests are happening right now.”



# STUDENTS PROTEST GRAND JURY VERDICT FOR OFFICERS WHO KILLED BREONNA TAYLOR

SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES

On Sept. 24, Kaila Thomas '21 left her Russian class feeling a burning need to do something. The night before, the verdict was announced that none of the Louisville police officers who shot and killed Breonna Taylor in March would be charged for her death. Yet, despite the grief and rage boiling inside of Thomas, the campus seemed unperturbed, the calm unruffled. She took to Instagram, calling for students to march with her the next day in protest of the verdict.

Despite receiving little more than 24 hours of notice, the campus community came out in force. Over 500 people, almost all students with some faculty and community members, attended the protest. Nearly a quarter of the 2,219 students living on campus or in the adjacent area joined.

Students gathered on Battell Beach and the McCullough lawn beginning at 2 p.m. on Friday, proceeding in carefully coordinated groups of 10 and filing down to the college green in neatly arranged pairs for the rally. College staff helped coordinate the march and ensured protesters followed social distancing rules.

Student speakers addressed the crowd at the rally, expressing what it means to be Black on Middlebury's campus and in the U.S. They called for the college and Middlebury community to take decisive action against racism locally, decrying them for their perceived inaction over the last few months.

In his speech at the rally, Luka Bowen '22 called for the college to seek out Black students and directly ask them what they need. In an interview with The Campus, he advocated for the college to direct the money toward

present material needs, such as financial aid and textbooks, rather than forming unnecessary committees and centers.

"We already have communities that we can go to," Bowen said. "The real problem is that many Black students can barely afford to go here."

Both Thomas and Bowen criticized the college for failing to prioritize anti-racism this semester in the same way they focused on Covid-19. While the college mandated that all students take two SafeColleges courses totalling 212 minute on the new Covid-19 protocols, they provided no anti-racism training.

"I am more afraid of getting brutalized by the police than getting coronavirus, and I'm scared of getting Covid-19," Thomas said in her speech. "This is as pressing as coronavirus measures right now."

Bowen also advocated for the college to defund Public Safety, which he believes exists solely to "harass Black students." Calls for the college to restructure the department and address its history of alleged racial profiling have grown over the past months.

Bowen called for white students, faculty, staff and community members to step up and "take the baton" to help Black students fight racism in Middlebury.

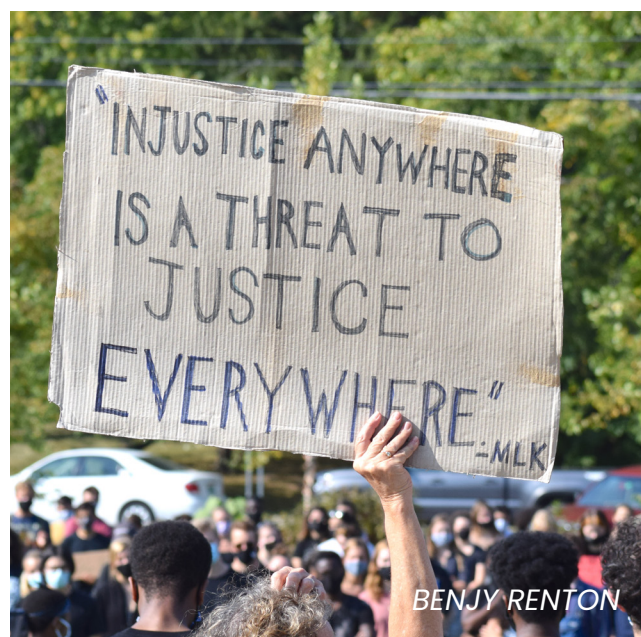
"We cannot end the white killing spree of our neighbors, our siblings, our parents, children, friends or any Black person in our community alone. We cannot end racism alone," Bowen said.

Particularly heartbreaking for many students was the fact that the only officer indicted, Brett Hankison, was charged for wrongfully endangering Taylor's neighbors. As one protester's sign read, "they only got charged for the bullets that missed." Several Black students expressed alternately feeling grief, rage and anguish.

"My name is [Breonna] too," said Breanna Moitt '24, one of the rally's speakers, in an interview with The Campus. "I'm a Black woman too, and the idea of me and my death being worth so little that the bullets hitting someone else's door are worth more than my life was so painful to think about."

For some, a small town in rural Vermont may feel far-removed from police shootings and the murder of Black people throughout the country, but for many students, it is impossible to feel distant from such events.

"We like to pretend that campus is a bubble, but it's not," Payne said. "[Racism and police brutality] affect my life here on campus as a Black woman; it's an active trauma. It's not just an Instagram story. It's my life."



BENJY RENTON

## 'FUEL THE PEOPLE'

REGINA FONTANELLI

"What talents do you have that help set people free?" Roodharvens Joseph '22 and his sister Gaïana Joseph asked themselves when they established their nonprofit, Fuel The People. For them, the answer was cooking. Driven by the belief that healthy food is the fuel for the revolution and called to action by the protests for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless others, the siblings prepared over 450 meals in their Yonkers home to hand out on the streets to hungry New York City protesters. After seeing the immediate impact they made on their first day of handing out meals, they knew they had to continue to feed the people — and Fuel The People was born.

"Every effort of resistance had a support system," Joseph said. "Throughout every revolution, there have been people contributing whatever they can toward the cause. For Fuel The People, it's food, water and essentials."

Fuel The People emphasizes the importance of access to healthy food for the liberation and prosperity of Black communities. In their mission statement, they write, "Black people need healthy food to live healthy lives and to continue being happy, to continue loving each other and finally to be our best selves for ourselves and for each of our respective communities."

Not only does Fuel The People aim to feed protestors on the front lines, they also look to make a long term

“EVERY EFFORT OF RESISTANCE  
HAD A SUPPORT SYSTEM.  
THROUGHOUT EVERY REVOLUTION,  
THERE HAVE BEEN PEOPLE  
CONTRIBUTING WHATEVER THEY CAN  
TOWARD THE CAUSE.”  
ROODHARVENS JOSEPH '22

difference by creating pathways to healthy food for Black communities — communities that are disproportionately affected by food deserts because of a history of redlining and racist government policies.

In the short time since its development, Fuel The People has garnered a significant amount of attention and support. They've been featured by several social media platforms, including First We Feast, Taste, the Tasting Table, Punch, Saveur, Food52, Afar, Cherrybombe and

more. They've collaborated with 15 BIPOC-owned restaurants in both Washington D.C. and New York City. The organization has plans for more collaborations in the future.

"My sister and I hustled, posted asking for donations for this simple project but then it blew up," Roodharvens Joseph said. "In 48 hours we raised \$4,000 so at that point we knew more had to be done."

Fuel The People estimates that it has provided around 6,000 meals since first hitting the streets on June 2. Since that first day in their Yonkers kitchen, they've also teamed up with Allegra Massaro and her brother Lorenzo Massaro to establish a chapter in Washington, D.C. Roodharvens Joseph is currently Chief Technology Officer and Volunteer Coordinator. He's happy he can use his passion and knowledge for food, sociology and computer science to help power the movement.



ROODHARVENS JOSEPH



# VOICES FOR CHANGE

## CHECKING IN WITH THE AUTHORS OF THREE LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE CAMPUS

ROYA TOURAN

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests that spread throughout the nation last summer, many Middlebury students and organizations called for institutional change, demanding the school take action against racial injustice and create a more equitable community. Through letters, testimonials and calls to action, student activists shed light on the ways racial inequalities and injustices run deep at Middlebury as a predominantly white institution. The college has created a multi-year action plan detailing initiatives intended to address inequality on campus and promote anti-racism. Many of the new initiatives came after students voiced their concerns and called for change. We check in with writers of three op-eds to see if the administration has met their demands and how they feel about Middlebury's progress toward becoming an antiracist institution.

### MIDD COPS OFF CAMPUS

Last July, Middlebury Cops Off Campus (MCOC) addressed a letter to President Patton urging the administration to restructure the role of public safety on campus and dissolve Middlebury's collaboration with police and private security. The letter claims that the presence of private security and punitive public safety systems place the most marginalized groups of the community at risk, and that these systems are "incompatible with Middlebury's stated goal of advancing racial justice and anti-racism."

The letter concludes with various demands, including the group's current primary goal of redirecting resources towards students' overall wellbeing and prioritizing expertise in first aid, mental health and de-escalation.

However, MCOC has been frustrated with the administration's response to their calls for change. Following their letter, the administration redirected MCOC to the Community Council.

Lynn Travnikova '20.5, one of the organizers of MCOC and former co-chair of the Community Council, was disappointed by the administration's lack of direct action. She believes some of their demands could have been implemented immediately and did not need to go through the long approval process of the Community Council.

According to Travnikova, the administration was also not responsive to the group's emails or requests for meetings, and MCOC has not been able to talk directly with the Senior Leadership Group of administrators.

"They have the opportunity to hear from us, and they have the opportunity to listen to student voices, but by directing us to the Community Council, there seems to be an intentional delay in actually getting to what we have to say," Chloe Fleischer '21.5, another MCOC organizer, said.

Due to the unusual fall semester, Community Council only held a few meetings, and MCOC did not meet with them until early December. Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration David Provost and Interim Director of Public Safety Dan Gaiotti were also present at the meeting.

"We could tell from the things that David Provost was saying that there is a massive misunderstanding about what we're asking for," Travnikova said. "They focused a lot more on the idea of cops and talking about Middlebury's relationship with the police department, when most of our focus and energy has gone towards Public Safety."

Travnikova believes this misunderstanding may come from the polarization of the issue in the national sphere and from a lack of true engagement with the issue beyond the name of the group.

According to Fleischer, Provost claims he wants to reform the Public Safety Department, but that the administration is having a lot of these conversations behind closed doors.

"As long as these conversations continue in private, it seems to me very unlikely that things are going to get that much better because there isn't really a clear understanding of what needs to happen," Fleischer said. "They're functioning with a misunderstanding of the problem, so any solutions will be based on an incomplete picture of what we're asking for."

### CONCERNED STUDENTS OF MIDDLEBURY

Concerned Students of Middlebury (CSM), formerly Black@Midd, wrote a letter to President Laurie Patton, the members of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) and

the Middlebury College community in direct response to "the tone-deaf statement issued by the Office of the President on May 31," which equated the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of racism, calling them 'two plagues.' The CSM letter, published in The Campus last June, discussed the offenses in President Patton's initial letter addressing BLM, provided instances of when the college has been complicit in allowing racism on campus and offered immediate and long-term actions for administrators to take.

Myles Maxie '22, one of the authors of the letter, saw that there was very little institutional support for ensuring certain voices are represented, specifically in decision-making bodies.

"I look back at my own history at Middlebury, researched previous history at Middlebury and saw that this isn't just a one-time failure of diction, it's a failure of action historically," Maxie said.

Administrators met the set of immediate actions CSM called for, which asked that three separate emails be sent from the school: one issuing an apology and the two others listing different resources for students.

The two other suggestions for this school year have also been well-received, according to Maxie. Beginning last semester, the SLG started meeting monthly with a group of BIPOC students representing different cultural organizations to help identify needs and implement institutional change.

CSM also asked that Middlebury designate a student or faculty member to represent communities of color within the Board of Trustees. The SGA appointed a second student constituent to the College Board of Advisors of the Board of Trustees near the end of the 2019–2020 school year. CSM and the SLG have discussed the possibility of redefining that role to accomplish CSM's demand. Maxie hopes to have a concrete solution to this in March.

Although the school responded well to the demands posed in the letter, further collaboration has often been difficult, according to Maxie. He also believes the school could implement better timelines for institutional initiatives. He is satisfied with the college's multi-year action plan but thinks more guidelines and checkpoints are necessary to hold the administration accountable for their progress.

CSM has also drafted a series of resolutions that were released throughout J-Term.

"Our purpose is to provide an avenue for students who have been historically disenfranchised at Middlebury to have their voice heard and be able to construct meaningful ways of leading to change," Maxie said. "We want a campus where maybe 20 years from now, 15 years from now, we don't need a CSM, because all needs of all students are being met, but as of now, that's just not the case."

### CAN YOU HEAR US NOW, PRESIDENT PATTON?

Last September, Kaila Thomas '21 planned a community protest in less than 24 hours following the verdict that none of the Louisville police officers who shot and killed Breonna Taylor would be charged for her death. Over 500 people, including students, faculty and community members, attended the protest.

On Oct. 1, Thomas and Rodney Adams '21 published a letter addressed to President Patton, denouncing her absence from the protest. Adams also shared his story from the evening after the protest, when he was the target of a racial slur by another Middlebury student.

There were a number of demands in the letter, including asking for a Black Public Safety officer, a Black faculty and staff recruitment program and a working body composed of Black students to help create anti-racism programming on campus.

Thomas said she and President Patton met following the open letter, and Thomas expressed her frustration with the college's minimal acknowledgement of the success of the protest.

"The racial event that happened with Rodney, it overshadowed the protest, which is totally fine, but then the administration solely focused on the tragedy rather than the accomplishment," Thomas said. "If the institution wants to be anti-racist, they can't just focus on the tragedies that happen. They need to focus and celebrate the accomplishments that also happen towards racial equity."

According to Thomas, all of the demands from the letter have been met or are in the process of being met, with the exception of the hiring of a Black public safety officer.

Thomas is also part of JusTalks, a peer-led initiative that examines structural inequalities on campus. In advancing the college's commitment to anti-racism, JusTalks partnered with the Feb orientation, where all incoming students were required to attend one of their conversations.

"We want to start really prioritizing racial diversity, equity and inclusion type of courses with these incoming classes," Thomas said.

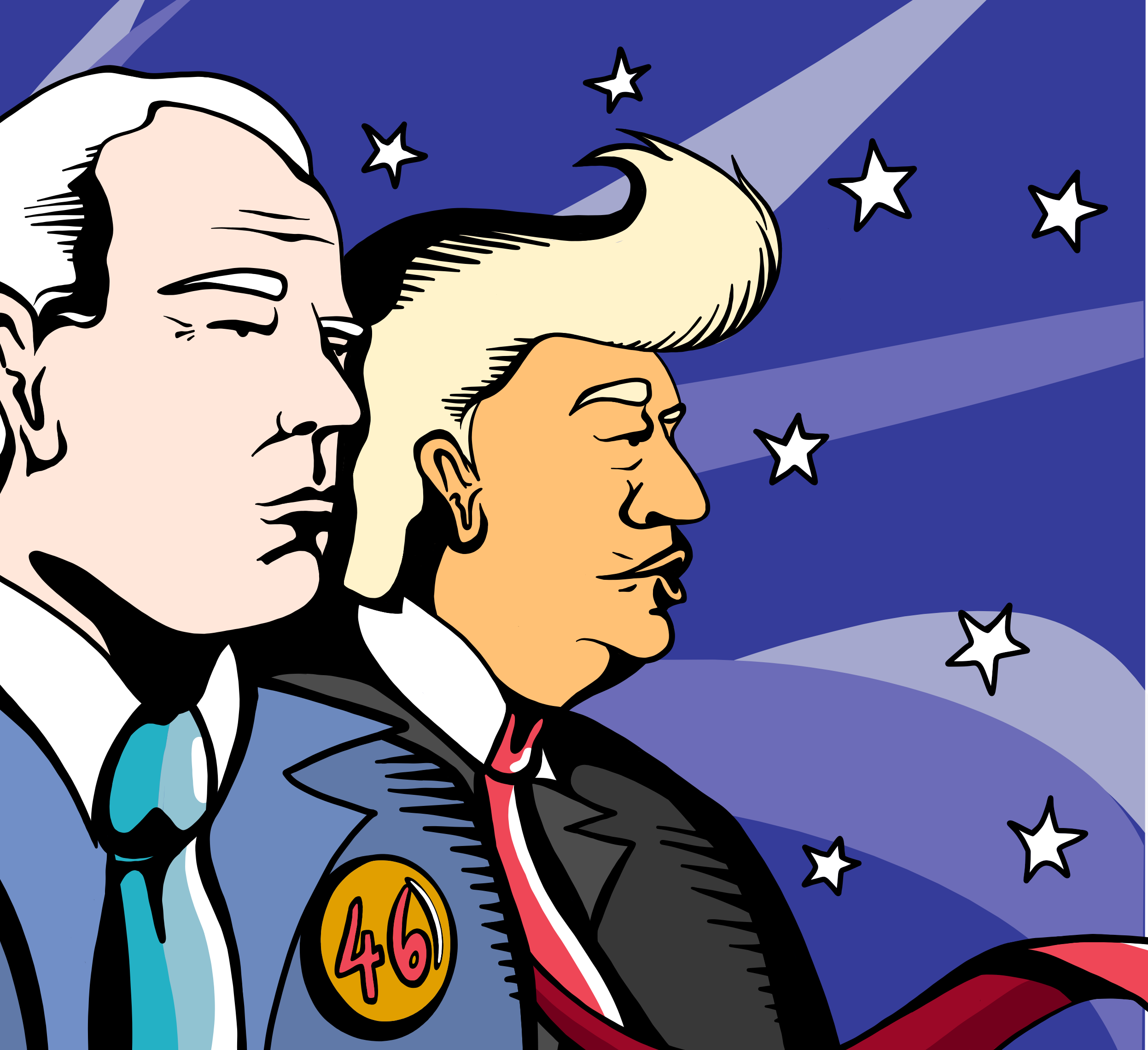
Thomas is unsure, however, about the plans to make these types of courses available for everyone but hopes they can be implemented soon.

"I think they should work toward immediate change, and I know that that's difficult sometimes momentarily [...] but I do think that the students of color on campus mostly want immediate change," Thomas said.

Thomas is mostly satisfied with Middlebury's response so far but acknowledges all the work that remains. She also understands the school has a lot to handle amid the pandemic.

*Editor's Note: The letter, "Can you hear us now, President Patton?" can be found on page 98.*





# Election 2020

BY TONY SJODIN

ILLUSTRATED BY  
PIA CONTRERAS  
BALBUENA

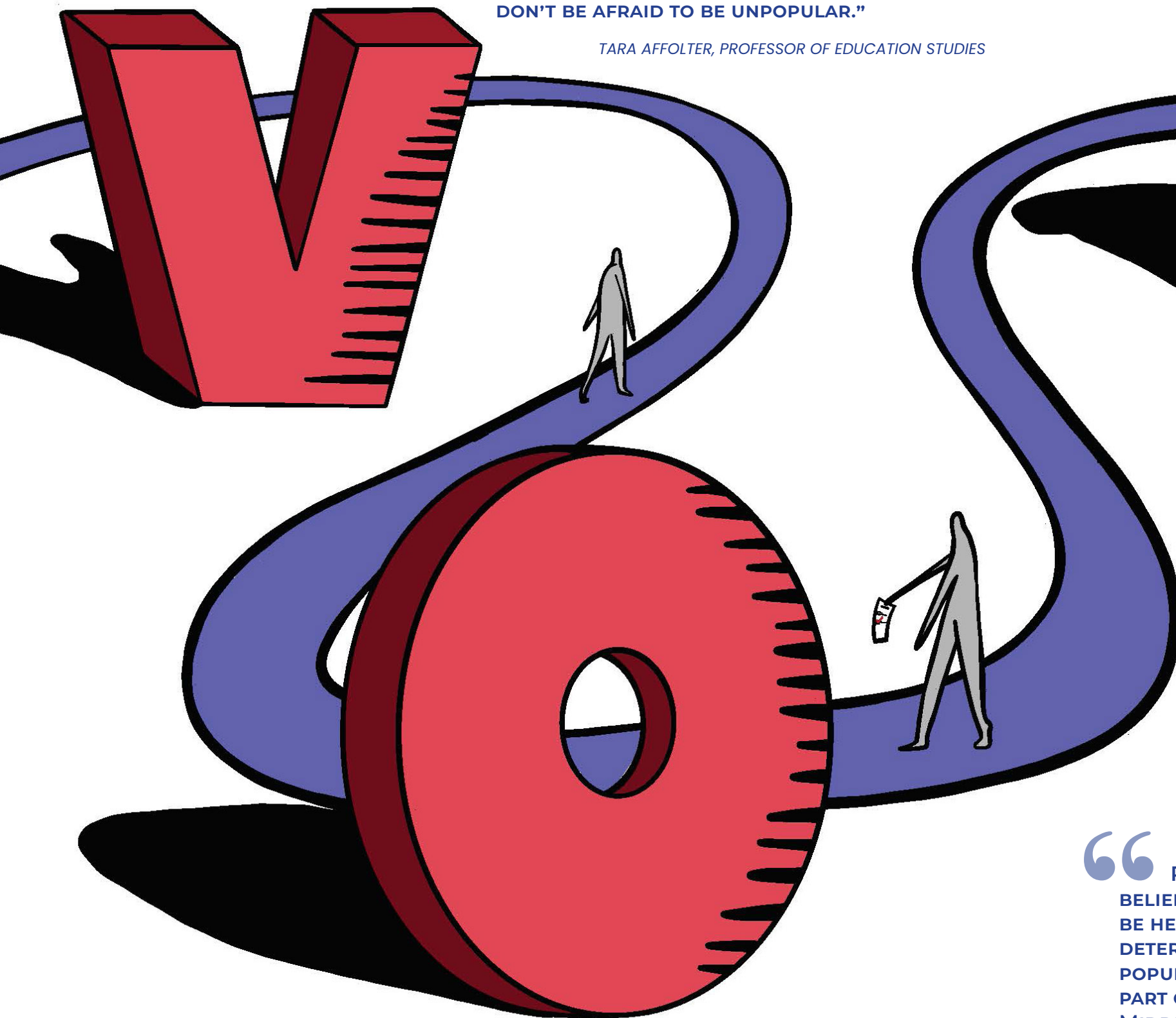


“ IF YOU WANT TO REPRESENT PEOPLE, YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT IS ON THEIR MINDS.”

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER BRAY (D-ADDISON)

“ THERE’S A CRITIQUE OUT THERE THAT IF YOU’RE TOO INVOLVED IN ACTIVISM THEN YOU’RE NOT A SERIOUS SCHOLAR, BUT I DON’T BUY THAT DICHOTOMY...THE TIME TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES IS OVER. WAKE UP, GET INVOLVED, ASK QUESTIONS, DON’T BE AFRAID TO BE UNPOPULAR.”

TARA AFFOLTER, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION STUDIES



## WHAT WE SAID AND WHAT WE DID:

QUOTES FROM STUDENTS, FACULTY AND CANDIDATES ABOUT THE 2020 ELECTION

“ I THINK THAT WE’RE FACING THE LARGEST POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CRISIS IN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE LAST 60 YEARS. I THINK YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT THAT.”

JAMIE MCCALLUM, PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY

“ REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL BELIEFS, EVERYONE DESERVES TO BE HEARD. THE LAST ELECTION WAS DETERMINED BY ABOUT HALF OF THE POPULATION, AND I WANTED TO BE A PART OF ENSURING THAT EVERYONE AT MIDDLEBURY HAS THE RESOURCES TO PARTICIPATE THIS YEAR.”

ANN-MARTIN SKELLY ’21

“ IT’S NOT ONE POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND IT’S NOT ONE STATE — IT’S ALL OVER THE NATION. WE SEE, OVER AND OVER AGAIN, WHENEVER THERE IS POLICE MISCONDUCT, IT DOES NOT GO PUNISHED BECAUSE WE DON’T HAVE SYSTEMS OF OVERSIGHT THAT WORK.”

DAVE SILBERMAN, ADDISON COUNTY HIGH BAILIFF

“ BECAUSE OF THE STATE OUR COUNTRY IS IN RIGHT NOW, I THINK PEOPLE FEEL A FIRE TO VOTE NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE.”

JULIA SINTON ’20.5

“ IN THE CONTEXT OF ACTS OF POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND PROTESTERS IN RESPONSE TO THOSE KILLINGS, WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE ROLE OF POLICE MORE THAN EVER RIGHT NOW. WE’VE SEEN THAT [POLICE] CAN’T REALLY BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE THEY’RE SUPPOSED TO SERVE.”

ASA SKINDER ’22.5,  
WASHINGTON COUNTY HIGH BAILIFF



# COLLEGE REVOKES GIULIANI'S HONORARY DEGREE

SOPHIA McDERMOTT-HUGHES

Middlebury revoked Rudolph Giuliani's 2005 honorary Doctor of Laws degree on Jan. 12 in light of his role in fomenting the violent insurrection at the United States Capitol on Jan. 6.

Giuliani, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer and former mayor of New York City, has spent months pushing the disproven conspiracy theory that Trump received more votes than President-elect Joe Biden in the November election. After repeatedly failing to provide evidence of voter fraud and overturn the election in court, he called for a "trial by combat" at the "March to Save America" rally in front of the White House on Jan. 6 in support of Trump. Later that day, the crowd violently stormed the capitol in a riot that left five dead.

Middlebury announced it was formally considering revoking the honorary degree on Sunday, Jan. 10 just hours after The Campus published an editorial calling for it to do so.

**"WE MUST NOT BE INDIFFERENT TO THE ACTIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE ACTIVELY WORKING AGAINST THEM, AND OPPOSED TO OUR INSTITUTIONAL VALUES."**

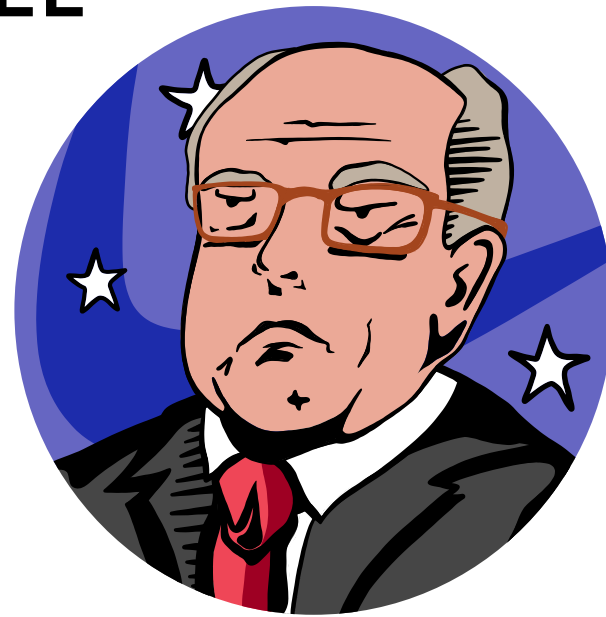
LAURIE PATTON

"Earlier this week, I spoke of our responsibility for safeguarding and improving our fragile democracy, especially those of us privileged to be in higher education," President Laurie Patton said in reference to a campus-wide email sent after the violent insurrection at the Capitol. "As we pursue these goals, we must not be indifferent to the actions of those who are actively working against them, and opposed to our institutional values."

Immediately after announcing that Giuliani's degree had been revoked, an all-student email from Dean of Students Derek Doucet warned students of the "volatile climate" surrounding this issue and offered resources for those who felt threatened or were in need of support.

The proceedings at Middlebury have attracted national news coverage and controversy as many students and alumni learned of Giuliani's honorary degree for the first time — while it was in the process of being taken away.

Middlebury chose to award Giuliani an honorary Doctor of Laws degree and host him as the commencement speaker in 2005 to acknowledge the importance of 9/11



to the graduating class, who arrived at Middlebury for the first time less than a week before the attack, according to Campus reporting at the time.

Even then, Giuliani's presence on campus was met with mixed reactions. Students published a series of opinion pieces opposing the decision and wore red cloth over their mouths during his commencement speech to protest his policies toward people of color, LGBT communities and the homeless while mayor of New York.

"Giuliani has a long and deeply disturbing history of turning a blind eye to police brutality, racial profiling, civil rights concerns, the health of the homeless and corporate greed," wrote David Edelson, the Dean of Students for Cook Commons at the time, in a Campus opinion piece. "To me he is emblematic of the looming shadow of authoritarianism and of overbearing state power that is of such concern in our nation these days."

The Campus also published an edited image of Giuliani with a Hitler mustache alongside an op-ed opposing Giuliani's initial invitation, generating widespread controversy and resulting in the resignation of then-editor in chief Andrea Gissing.

Ben Gore '05, who authored the op-ed more than 15 years ago, supports the college's decision. "We are on the brink, and in moments like this we are as a country, making choices that are going to guide what happens the next five, 10, 15 years. Are we going to pull back from or go over [the brink]?" he said.

In sharp contrast to his efforts to overturn the election on false claims of fraud, Giuliani advised the 2005 graduating class in his speech, "Winning is wonderful. Winning in sports. Winning elections. It beats losing them. But the reality is that winning is only fulfilling if you do it through the rules, and you do it by being able to contribute to other people."

# CAPITOL RIOTS LEAVE D.C.-BASED STUDENTS REELING

MAGGIE REYNOLDS

As the gravity of the violent insurrection at the Capitol reverberated across the nation, Middlebury students in the D.C. area reeled from the shock of its proximity.

When the attacks began, Ethan Sherman '21 was at his home about half a mile from the Capitol. "I started to hear sirens outside in the early afternoon, and they persisted for the rest of the day. As news of the insurrection trickled in, I was glued to my phone," Sherman said.

Just outside the city, Max Nagle '24 also felt the shock of the riots. "I was scared of what might happen after dark," said Nagle, who lives in Arlington, VA. He expressed concern that some of the insurrectionists would be forced out of the city and into his state.

New precautions, including fences and concrete barriers, were installed after the Jan. 6 insurrection, keeping D.C. residents who had typically watched the inauguration in person from getting too close.

Although the initial fear has begun to dissipate in the wake of the attack, the scars of the events remain. With barely enough time to process the Jan. 6. insurrection, Washington, D.C. began preparing for President Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20. As the date approached, security tightened — and its impact on the mood around the city was palpable.

Mia Zottola '24 of Arlington described the feeling as "apocalyptic" and Sherman said he saw "troops on every corner for about nine blocks" when he walked down a prominent residential street the day before the inauguration.

For Sherman, knowing the past actions of the police and military — especially during last year's Black Lives Matter protests — made him nervous and distrustful of the security in D.C.

"I was disgusted to see them put up very little resistance to armed insurrectionists storming the Capitol, considering that they tear gassed... and shot rubber bullets at the protestors over the summer," he said.

Sunday Night Environmental Group (SNEG) leader Divya Gudur '21 expressed concerns similar to Sherman's about the increased police and military presence in the city. She said that SNEG members have been trying to support the D.C. population since this month's attack, emphasizing difficulties in providing mutual aid, particularly for individuals without housing.

In particular, Gudur noted that homeless and low-income groups in D.C. have been heavily impacted by the shutdown. As the military cleared out the streets

community service workers were left struggling to provide them with essential services.

The domestic terrorist attacks put further strain on an inauguration already heavily modified due to the pandemic. During a typical year, Sherman said he would have walked down to the Capitol and National Mall to celebrate.

**"I WAS DISGUSTED TO SEE THEM PUT UP VERY LITTLE RESISTANCE TO ARMED INSURRECTIONISTS STORMING THE CAPITOL, CONSIDERING THAT THEY TEAR GASSED... AND SHOT RUBBER BULLETS AT THE PROTESTERS OVER THE SUMMER."**

ETHAN SHERMAN '21

Similarly, Mia and Marian Zottola, both members of the class of '24, had hoped to enter the city from Arlington to attend the inauguration, but the military presence blocked nonresidents from traveling into D.C. Even though Sherman and the Zottolas were a few miles away from the inauguration, they watched it on TV like the rest of the country.





# UPROOTED

From the bright red of the Japanese Maple outside the Emma Willard House, the warm yellow Ginkgos in front of Mead Memorial Chapel, the hot pink Rhododendrons behind Forest Hall to the blazing orange Sugar Maples outside Battell, the Middlebury campus boasts stunning sights year-round.

For the most part, you probably pay little attention to the trees that surround you on campus, outside of perhaps snapping nature photos to post or send to family members. With all that has happened over the past year, it's especially easy to lose the memories of foliage that fill out the edges of the most dramatic turning points and vivid memories. However, even though so much has changed since departing from campus last March, one thing has remained constant: our beloved campus itself.

BY EMILY BALLOU





## THE DARKEST DAY

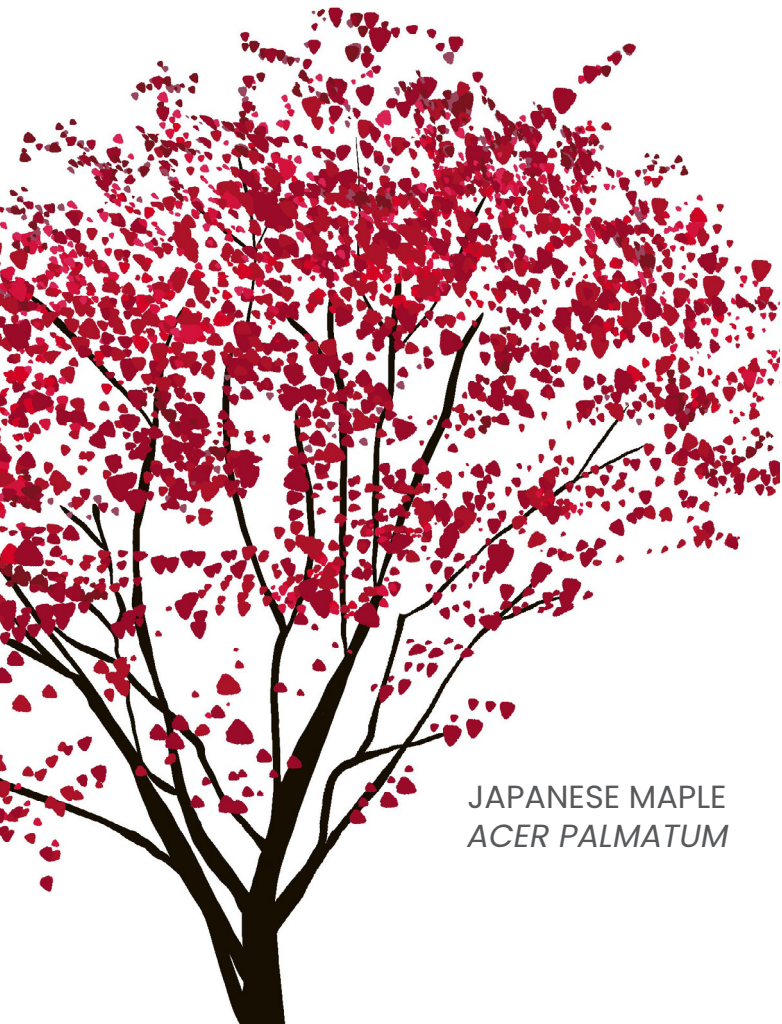
*Tuesday, March 10, 2020, 1:08 p.m.*

Campus horticulturist Tim Parsons was walking across campus, ready to prune trees, when he suddenly received the text. Ding. “Date Change: Middlebury College will begin spring break this Friday, March 13, after classes end, which is one week earlier than scheduled. This will be a two-week break with classes resuming — remotely — on Monday, March 30. Remain Home After Break: Following spring break, students who can will be expected to remain at home and not return to campus until further notice.”

“I knew from the moment I read the screenshotted email, it was not going to be good,” Parsons said. “It just seemed off. Everything was so up in the air, and nobody knew what to do, or what to say. People get used to predictability, stability and it just felt off.”

Parsons noted that although the reckless acts of vandalism across campus and in town during the last week were apparent, the damage did not seem to have targeted trees as student vandalism often has in the past.

“I mostly saw signs being torn down, not trees that students are often keen to uproot,” he said. “It was yet another thing that felt odd.”



JAPANESE MAPLE  
ACER PALMATUM

## SPEAKING FOR THE TREES

It is the deeply rooted love for the campus and Middlebury College community that makes Tim Parsons’ job both rewarding and a tall order.

Middlebury’s campus horticulturist since 2006, Parsons’ knowledge of the college’s greenery borders on encyclopedic. A Vermont-certified horticulturist and a certified arborist by the International Society of Arboriculture, Parsons was in the green industry for more than 25 years, running his own landscape design company and a garden center for nearly 10 years. Additionally, Parsons is a past president of Green Works, which is the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association, and he was chosen in 2003 as the Young Nurseryman of the Year by the New England Nursery Association. Although he grew up in Connecticut, Parsons has lived in Vermont for 22 years and now lives at the base of Snake Mountain in Weybridge, Vermont with his wife, three daughters and “too many gardens.”

At Middlebury, Parsons’ responsibilities include the care and maintenance of the college’s robust urban forest, full landscape design and installation measures, and management of the sustainable turfgrass of the athletic fields. Along with caring for the abundance of trees on campus, Parsons has taught a “Trees and the Urban Forest” course several times, led field trips for other courses, and marshals a popular “Campus Tree Tour” each fall during Homecoming. He also writes a blog — appropriately titled “The Middlebury Landscape” — and is a member of multiple college committees such as the Master Plan Implementation Committee, the Emergency Response Team and Community Council. He has also served on the Environmental Council.

“I love everything about my job, but seeing how the college landscape makes people happy is the most rewarding part,” Parsons said.

## WITHERING LIFE

Phenology — which comes from the greek “phaino,” meaning to show or appear — is the study of recurring life cycles of the living things around us, the seasonal experiences of insects, plants, mammals and their relationship to time, weather and climate. Parsons compares this to the collective experience between the environment and people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a landscaper, Parsons observed that the quiet looming over campus relates to the “natural ebb and flow of things.”

“I don’t know the exact class schedules all that well, but people certainly know when classes are out,” he said.

Parsons said after a majority of students left campus mid-March, he would walk to a certain part of campus where there are usually clusters of students studying or socializing, but there was no one there.

“The first week or so it’s nice to ride on those silly Gators and not be in the way of folks, but after that, it just wasn’t the same,” he said. “It was just really sad.”

“I remember the CFA parking lot is filled with crab apples. When those come to bloom they are absolutely spectacular,” Parsons said. “I was actually quite excited to see them this spring because I had never seen them bloom without any cars in the lot, so I made a specific point to walk to campus to see them.” But the crab apples did not bloom.

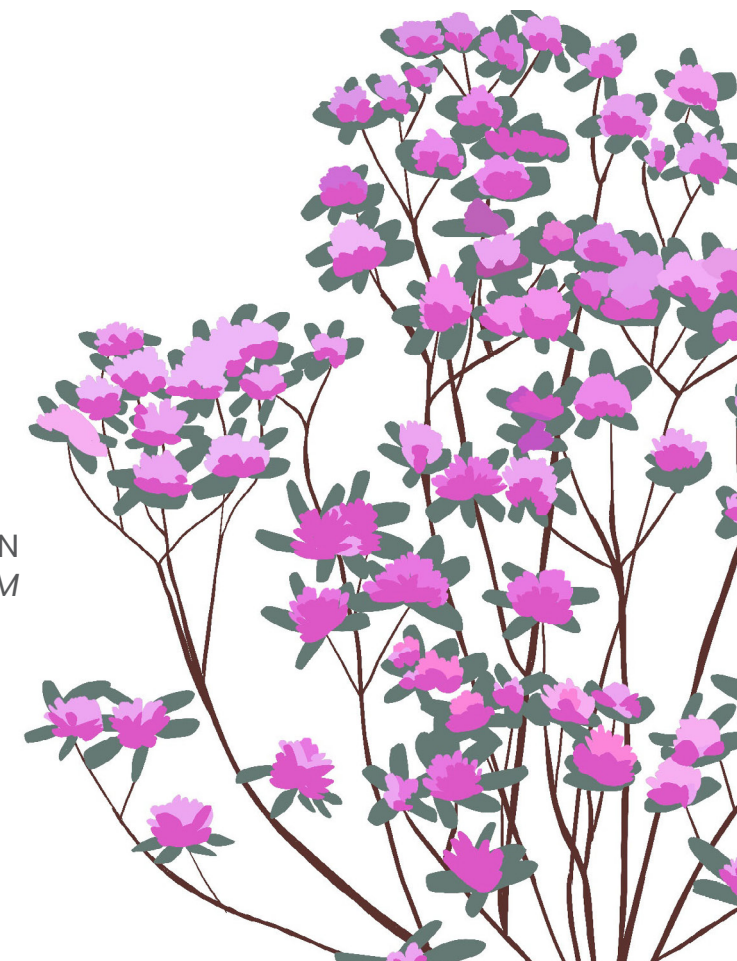
“Horticulturally, trees and shrubs sort of had their own pandemic too,” Parsons said. “We had a severe drought and it didn’t rain for weeks on end. Lawns turned brown, leaves started to fall early, and wherever I looked, plants looked lifeless, much like how I felt.”

Parsons explained that like people and the pandemic, it can take years for the trees to fully recover from damage.

“I spent the whole summer watering trees, and I don’t remember a year it was this dry for a long time,” he said. “I had hoped that some of the high traffic locations would receive a much-needed break, but the drought was so bad, there wasn’t much of a difference.”

Throughout the summer, Parsons took solo walks around campus, checking in to make sure everything was still okay. He noted that the treasured hot pink Rhododendrons behind Forest Hall did, in fact, bloom as usual, a stark reminder of the loss of spring, and especially graduation. According to Parsons, the bright flowering bushes were planted there to serve as the original ceremony location, with chairs extending out across Battell Beach. After planning for the commencement ceremony all winter, Memorial Day weekend eventually came that May, and with no students to graduate, Parsons had that weekend off for the first time in 15 years.

“When the students are gone after commencement and before language schools, it’s peaceful and nice, but after a couple of weeks of that, everyone’s ready for the energy to come back,” he said. “The whole point to working at the school is to help the students out, and that’s why we’re here, so it just doesn’t really feel right when campus is empty.”



PINK RHODODENDRON  
RHODODENDRON CAMPANULATUM



## INSTAGRAM UPDATES

Known for sharing snapshots of the college's picturesque landscape, his family, sleeping pets and even an occasional baked good or two, Parsons' Instagram (@middland) also happens to be a favorite account for many Middlebury students. His image captions are pure musings that bring Parsons' love for the small joys in life to the public eye.

On March 13, Parsons wrote, "Adopted a plant today, I named it Riley. Goodbye to all my student friends leaving today, hoping to see you again." And on a photo of an empty campus, a sarcastic, "Day one at Middlebury College. 9:00, sidewalks filled as students walk to class."

Parsons continued these logs the rest of the month, updating his followers on the life they abruptly left behind on campus. "Day three at Middlebury College. Cross country trail, missing the runners on the blue sky day." "Day four. One of my traditions after the students move out is looking for rocks geology students don't want to bring home and leave in parking lots. Here's this year's finds. Anybody want to ID?" "Day five, quiet."

As warmer weather arrived in Middlebury, Parsons continued to update his small but mighty fanbase on the still life coming back to campus, highlighting the blossoming of White Siberian squill, serviceberry, daffodils, magnolias, the redbud trees in front of Axinn and the green grass beginning to show on the lawns. And on May 24, a picture of a flowering crab apple tree.

"Today would have been the day I decorated the commencement stage at Middlebury College then waited to see my former students and friends march in. So to them, I say so long, good bye, come back soon. Wish you could be here. #middseniorcelebration." One student commented, "I miss the campus trees," to which Parsons replied, "and they miss you!"

Parsons' consistent updates continued throughout the summer, increasing as the date drew nearer for the August return to campus. He posted photos of the Adirondack chairs in storage, ready to be set outside again for use, renovated outdoor classroom spaces for the new norm of safe socially distant learning and a shot of the Brodingnagian tents outside of McCullough wittily captured, "Intense."

And in October, Parsons called to action his growing fan base to fundraise for financial aid at the college. "As the Middlebury College arborist I've learned that the strength and resilience of our urban forest is based upon its diversity," he wrote. "If you can, help the 'MoveMidd' effort to help keep Middlebury the inclusive space it is. Link in bio, I figured out how to do that."

Nearly half of all Middlebury students receive financial aid, and as the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues, disproportionately affecting students of color, that number grows and the need for student academic funding rises. "It's important for everyone to have the opportunity to learn here, regardless of their background," Parsons said.

Parsons' fall semester updates petered out in December, ending with a quintessential photo of Mead Memorial Chapel that read, "And, just like that, campus empties out again, and it's just the cold trees and I. Hopefully students are returning in a couple months, if everyone can get their act together. For everyone that left for the semester, here is today at Middlebury College. We'll try and keep the snow around for your return."

## STAFF SHIFTING

The college's organic garden, The Knoll, holds a founding mission to educate and nourish its community. This came into clear focus when the onset of the pandemic left many staff and community members without a steady source of income.

As the pandemic continued throughout the year, staff concerns related to employment and compensation continued to loom large. A week after students left campus, the college committed to full wage continuity and no layoffs through June 30, a pledge administrators have since tentatively extended to next July in their new 2021 budget. Although the college set up the Covid-19

pay bank to support staff members throughout the pandemic, many staff who cannot work remotely still needed to use their own combined time off to cover their days stuck at home. While many staff members have remained at home, others have begun to return to campus on staggered work schedules.

In anticipation of the community's emergency food needs over the summer and fall, combined with the issues regarding staff employment hours, the college gave The Knoll permission to grow produce to meet community emergency food needs and granted approval to bring in dining employees for paid full-time work over the summer. Parsons' wife Nancy, a chef in Atwater Dining, was one of the individuals relocated there.

"I enjoyed getting to work with people I otherwise never would have," Nancy said.

"Bringing staff members from other departments to work here was necessary," Megan Brakeley '06, The Knoll's current manager, said. "Even though life on campus stopped, life at The Knoll did not."

"We missed the students this year because we connect with a lot of them in close quarters through dining, and you just grow to love them," Nancy said. "With proper social distancing, safety measures and the change in schedules, that has drastically changed."

Spaces that once connected students and staff don't exist in the same form these days, and dining staff have taken notice.

"Students aren't gathering in dining halls anymore, so we've completely lost all sense of community that happens in those spaces," she said. "It is one of the most drastic changes to campus life, and something not easily recreated in a pandemic-safe manner."

## RETURNING WHERE WE LEFT OFF

Just as Dining Services prepared for another round of individually packaged meals, the Grounds Department was also busy preparing for students to return to Middlebury for the spring semester, an ominous time that marked a year since the campus was abandoned.

"I'm always amazed at how smart and resilient plants are, and that's exactly like Middlebury now," Parsons said.

Before students returned larger tents were installed across campus and the golf course was groomed for cross country skiing. The carpentry shop got busy building 40 new Adirondack chairs to add to the fleet to promote outside socializing, and the grounds crew assembled portable fire pits. "Pro tip for students? Bring

marshmallows," Parsons quipped.

"I'm really looking forward to having campus come alive again," Parsons said that winter. "It's comforting to know that we'll all be together once again, and hopefully not have to miss out on another spring here."

## SYMBOL OF OUR STRENGTH

From the growth around the pond behind the Mahaney Center for the Arts to the comforting line of trees between Axinn and Davis Library, the ivy-covered walls of Battell Hall to the unexpected diversity of the woods around the Trail Around Middlebury, the greenery of Middlebury College holds an important place on campus and within the hearts of Panthers young and old. And after a long, cold winter away from campus, Middlebury now invites the arrival of warmer weather, the opening of forsythia and the return of life to campus as the harbingers of spring.

*Author's Note: Middlebury College sits on land belonging to the Abenaki Nation. We have all contributed and been complicit in the brutal colonization of this Indigenous land. The Western Abenaki are the traditional caretakers of this Vermont area N'dakinna, or homeland. We give our gratitude to the Abenaki elders and Indigenous inhabitants of Turtle Island past and present, and are thankful for the opportunity to share in the bounty and protection of this environment.*



GINKGO TREE  
GINKGO BILOBA



SUGAR MAPLE  
ACER SACCHARUM







# A PART TOGETHER

This year saw us thrust from our dorms, our jobs and our schedules. It scattered a once densely populated campus across the country and the world, casting us into our homes and away from each other. We experienced loss of both life and community. As the number of Covid-19 cases skyrocketed, our in-person encounters plummeted. In order to make sense of the ever-changing world around us, we wrote. We put to words the frenzied thoughts in our minds. We wrote about how empty our once lively cities now felt. We wrote about closures of sports, of schools and of relationships. We wrote about racial injustice, about the need for change that would not be quelled even in a pandemic. We wrote about music and art, about the coziness of our rooms and the way we express love. We wrote about the safety of our parents and of our towns. Most of all, we wrote about each other. About how we will live apart yet stay together. About building community across time zones and oceans and borders. About how we will make it through the pandemic and come out stronger on the other side.

This is a collection of us. Of how we made sense of the most uncertain and turbulent year of our collective lives.

BY OWEN MASON-HILL & MAX PADILLA  
ILLUSTRATED BY PIA CONTRERAS BALBUENA & MAX PADILLA

92

A Return to Street  
Haunting

*Ellie Eberlee*

104

Goodbye

*Regina Fontanelli*

Room to Breathe

*Rain Ji*

94

Having a Parent on  
the Frontlines

*Lily Laesch*

A world Without

Sports

*Miguel Espinosa*

106

Hey Midd, U Up?

*Maria Kaouris*

I Quarantine Dated

Casper the Ghost

*Maria Kaouris*

96

You Can't Go Home  
Again

*Jake Gaughan*

Ginsburg's Passing

*Max Padilla*

108

In My Room

*Rachel Rose*

I Was One of the Two

On-Campus Covid-19

Cases

*Anonymous*

98

Can You Hear Us Now,  
President Patton?

*Kaila Thomas &*

*Rodney Adams*

110

Can We Please  
Stop Talking About  
Quarantine Weight?

*Sophie Clark*

We Must Protect the

Town of Middlebury

*Henry Ganey*

100

Ruminations of a  
Human Being

*Martin Williams*

Automatically Suspect

*Kemi Fuentes-George*

112

Ludovico Einaudi's  
Most Intimate Concert

*Owen Mason-Hill*

Dave Chappelle Isn't

Joking Anymore

*Owen Mason-Hill*

102

2020 in 100 Words

114

America's Normal: A  
Tragedy

*Max Padilla*

New Places, Old Faces

*Sabine Poux*



# A RETURN TO STREET HAUNTING

ELLIE EBERLEE

The last time I walked in Toronto — and I mean real walks, not those trips around the block you take on school breaks — it was summer. I didn't look around much then. Now, wandering neighborhoods in a self-isolated, distraction-starved state, I absorb it all; my gaze is practically greedy as it settles on pastel awnings and construction scaffolding, on small dogs wearing leopard-print booties and middle-schoolers tripping over razor scooters. I read every street sign, relishing place names that aren't "upstairs" or "the kitchen."

I'm not the first to find catharsis putting one foot in front of the other. In her recently published memoir, Rebecca Solnit invests even aimless wandering with a sense of purpose ("it felt," writes Solnit of strolls taken in her twenties, "like I was getting somewhere"). And Virginia Woolf's 1930 essay "Street Haunting" builds on an expansive tradition of literary flâneurs, exploring the figurative escapes offered by city streets. In leaving our house, writes Woolf, we "shed the self our friends know us by... When the door shuts on us, [the limits of our identity] vanish. The shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves, to make for themselves a shape distinct from others, is broken..." Out walking, Woolf claims, "we are no longer quite ourselves."

I've struggled with mental health for years; it takes a lot less than a pandemic for my personal shell-like covering to prove suffocating. Six weeks of sheltering-in-place haven't helped. By this point, I'm pretty desperate to be anything but quite myself — and so I take Woolf at her word, and begin to walk.

It works. Tracing the tall, dense streets of Toronto's Annex, I seek out an escape which Woolf hailed the "greatest of pleasures." Unlike Woolf, though, I don't swap the "straight lines of [my] personality" for new, imagined identities. Because I don't want to "put on briefly for a few minutes the bodies and minds of others" — not really. When I street-haunt, I shed the current version of myself for former, freer ones.

I find them, too, on sidewalks and outside stores they used to frequent. Here's an old me, for instance, on a street I canvassed last summer in anticipation of Canada's federal election. Over the course of those humid nights, my gloveless knuckles knocked on hundreds of

doors. Most people were out of town, so even a sneezing or coughing stranger formed cause for excitement; any anxiety stemmed from trying to remember political talking points, not calculate the probability of airborne Covid-particles. Two metres' distance was the last thing on my mind (unless, of course, whoever answered the door was voting Conservative).

And there: another old self by the Dupont Food Depot, on the doors of which now clings a precarious cardboard sign. 11a.m.–10p.m., reads the ballpoint scratch. 12 ppl max.

Normally, the Depot is open 24 hours. I know because it was well past midnight when I'd stop last August, en route home from my hostessing shift. These days, the older man behind the cash looks stressed. Last summer, he'd smile when I set my signature purchase — a half-pint of Kawartha Dairy Moose Tracks ice cream — down by the register. He didn't flinch, either, if I fumbled around in my backpack for spare loonies and toonies, opting to pay in grimy, potentially virus-carrying coins rather than tap my card.

Now, I marvel at that germ-ignorant irreverence. I'd come straight out of the subway, slick with sweat and grease from bussing empty pizza plates — and not once did I wait the five-minute home trip home to wash my hands. Instead, I pulled the lid off my Moose Tracks as I walked, licking freezer burn from the ice-cream's surface and rooting out peanut butter cups with a plastic spoon.

I meet yet another summer self on the Rosedale railway tracks. That version of me was driven up here by a different isolation, the kind which follows breaking off a four-year relationship.

That sounds sad — I didn't come to the tracks to wallow. I came to sit cross-legged on the warm asphalt and work through the remaining pages of my watercolor sketchbook; to listen to Supertramp and the sound of car horns on nearby Avenue Road. Back before an uncompromised respiratory system became my most prized possession, I'd even enjoyed the rare cigarette. Watching Joan Mitchell-esque scribbles of smoke rise up from the orange tip, I wondered, lazily, what senior year at Middlebury would be like. I imagined how good it would feel to take muddy runs along the TAM, to drink



endless, watery mugfuls of Vermont Coffee Company Medium Roast alongside friends in Atwater dining hall. I looked forward to lectures, to late nights in Davis library writing my thesis on "Mrs. Dalloway" and "To the Lighthouse."

A kid skipping virtual high school streaks by on his bike, much too close for Covid-age comfort. When he looks back, I give him the finger. And then I feel bad. It isn't his fault I'm finishing my undergrad over Zoom. I can't blame him for being up here, either. By now, the remote workday has ended and the sidewalks surge with runners, making effective social distancing impossible. It's time to head back.

I dread going home. Still, street-haunting helps. If nothing else, it reminds me that I'm not "tethered to the single self" who, minutes from now, will resume her station on the living-room couch — at least, not forever. Life post-Covid will come, and, when it does, a future version of me will enjoy all of the same vivid colors and textures which marked old experiences. New ones, too.

With that in mind, I mount the steps of my father's front porch. And — am I imagining it? Or is my heel-dragging punctuated by a kind of gratitude? Because I'm lucky,

really, to find "the usual door... the chair turned as I left it." Lucky to have a kind, comfortable home to self-isolate in, to have a family who can work from the safety of their dining room tables. Lucky, even, that the pain returning to my chest is only anxiety (rather than a sign I've contracted Covid).

I'm grateful, too, for the essay underpinning my new survival strategy. Nine decades before I'd heard the term "coronavirus," Woolf anticipated not only the necessity of escaping, but the literal and figurative refuge found by returning. Because as I "approach [my] own doorstep again," I take undeniable (albeit grudging) comfort in feeling "the old possessions fold me round..." — in feeling the "self, which has been blown about at so many street corners, which has battered like a moth at the flame of so many [suddenly, temporarily] inaccessible lanterns, sheltered and enclosed."

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*Editor's Note: Ellie Eberlee '20 was the 2019-2020 Senior Opinion Editor of The Campus. This piece was originally published April 27, 2020.*



# HAVING A PARENT ON THE FRONTLINES

LILY LAESCH

“Are you coming home tomorrow?” I texted my mom on my third day of social isolation, still in a hazy state of heartbreak and denial and seeking a familiar comfort.

A minute later, she responded: “This makes me sad. I don’t think so.”

Not the answer I wanted, but the one I knew was coming. As an internal medicine physician at the Seattle Swedish Medical Hospital, my mother had finished her four shifts for the week. And yet she still had to stand by on call, waiting.

At the time, internal hospital projections said it would be 10 days until Seattle — where the first American coronavirus death took place — looked like Italy. This wasn’t hard to believe: All over the city, hospitals had canceled all elective surgeries and non-essential appointments in order to transform entire wings to prepare for the coming influx of Covid-19 patients. On a soccer field where I used to play, they’d begun construction of a 200-bed field hospital. By all accounts, it would be mere days until the healthcare systems were overrun and overextended — and so my mom stayed, to linger amidst the strange calm that preceded the terrifying, inevitable storm of patients.

After I left for college, my family moved to North Central Washington, with my mom commuting in and out of Seattle for work. Now, she remains in the city alone, unable to return to her family, and each day that passes without her feels like a tremendous loss. It may be safer for me out here, but it is stranger; especially now that the physical presence of my mom has been replaced with a speakerphone that occupies the fifth spot at the dinner table.

Already, my mother is beginning to feel the strain. At 3 a.m. on the same night my mom confirmed she would not be returning home, she checked herself into urgent care with unusually high blood pressure accompanied by a serious anxiety attack. This was the result of a vicious cycle of news consumption and somber conference calls in regards to ventilators, masks, fatality rates and testing availability. In an eerie late-night role reversal, she was reassured by the urgent care specialist that many other doctors felt the same way, and then dispatched. Moments like those challenge my own false preconceptions about healthcare workers, who seem like these invincible and untouchable beings that will swoop in to save us all. In reality, they’re significantly more vulnerable than most — and their ability to effectively do their jobs hinges on us.

In fact, for many healthcare providers, it is a manner of when, not if, they will become patients themselves.

Nationwide, many are opting to sew their own masks or use bandanas as the medical supply quickly depletes. Additionally, all over the country, the burden of hazardous care is fragmenting families like mine, as many clinicians opt to separate from loved ones instead of risking exposing them to the virus.

In the weeks leading up to my departure from Middlebury, I called my mom once a day (if not multiple times) to worry and ask ridiculous questions and then worry some more. I relied on her in each moment of coronavirus-adjacent uncertainty while still on campus — but now it had become apparent that I needed to stop. I needed to stop asking her if my persistent cough meant the world was ending. I needed to stop pretending she was this untouchable and omniscient superwoman who could instantly assuage my unease. (I’m now forbidden from uttering anything along the lines of “I’m bored” to her, as she reminded me that she would give up her frenzied panic and despair for boredom in an instant.) What she is up against is unimaginable, and far more dismal than my not-leaving-the-couch and missing-my-friends grumpiness will ever be. Last week, my mom jokingly asked who I thought my 14-year old brother would prefer as a legal guardian. I wondered how much pain was disguised behind her lighthearted tone.

It may be months before I see my mom again, but this time I’m not across the country at Middlebury. I’m mere hours away, wrangling my siblings in some messy semblance of fabricated mothering, trying and failing to fill her shoes. The other day, during one of our frequent, petty arguments about whose turn it was to load the dishwasher, my younger brother uttered one of his favorite lines: “Don’t tell me what to do, you’re not my mom.” But then he paused, letting a tiny, nervous laugh escape. “Well, I guess now, you kind of are.”

When we talk about “flattening the curve,” we are not just looking to protect obscure and cryptic bureaucratic systems. The framework of these institutions is comprised of valiant individuals who are not immune and not superhuman. And yet despite their own humanity and susceptibility, they will continue to show up even if there are not enough ICU beds or ventilators or testing kits or pieces of equipment to keep them safe. My mom stays at work for you, miles and hours away from her loved ones. Please, please stay at home for her.

*Editor’s Note: Lily Laesch ’23 is an Opinion Editor for The Campus. This piece was originally published April 2, 2020.*

# ON A WORLD WITHOUT SPORTS

MIGUEL ESPINOSA

Several days had passed since the suspension of the 2019-2020 NBA season. I popped open Twitter and encountered a video on my homepage: marble racing. “Day four without sports: Marble1 racing is intense!” said the caption. I played the video, and focused my attention on a stream of miniature, colorful orbs dashing through a racetrack engraved in sand. “Damn,” I thought to myself. “This shutdown is really going to suck.”

Like in sports, the outcome of the marble race was uncertain. For some people, that might be exciting enough to provide a thrill, especially when money is at stake. But I’m sure most of us would prefer to spectate a sporting event, especially when we’re so starved for entertainment. Certainly, we can binge watch movies or television shows, but sports carry an unscripted-ness that makes them special. Beyond simply portraying entertaining levels of athletic ability or following the rules of the game in question, the best sports moments capture cathartic human experiences.

When Tiger Woods won the 2019 Masters Tournament almost exactly a year ago, the event’s overarching narrative revolved around the idea of redemption. Tiger’s early success as an indomitable superstar on track to becoming the greatest golfer ever was soon eclipsed by extramarital affairs and injury. Set against the backdrop of a sinuous path to redemption, his re-emergence as a champion appealed to a broad audience, sports and non-sports fans alike. After sealing victory with a bogey putt on the 18th, an older, balding Tiger iconically ventured into the crowd and embraced his son and daughter. For viewers, the scene was touching: life’s difficulties clearly humbled the once-arrogant prodigy, and his 10- and 12-year old son and daughter, accustomed to seeing him struggle for the past decade, finally watched him succeed in golf’s most prestigious tournament.

Often, sports storylines resonate with us on even more extreme levels.

Whenever the fast, hard-hitting southpaw from the Philippines, Manny Pacquiao, entered the boxing ring against a major opponent during the peak of his career in the late 2000s, my Filipino-American family (along with 10 to 20 of our closest friends), would pause our activities for the day, gather around a television and focus our attention on that night’s matchup. Such gatherings happened all throughout the Philippines. In fact, it was expected for crime rates to drop to zero percent whenever he fought. Pacquiao, considered one of the greatest boxers of all time, won our imaginations because of his story; before all the titles and his \$220 million net worth, Pacquiao was born in a village in Mindanao, a southern Philippine island crippled by poverty and religious

conflict. The “Pac-man” reportedly never saw a TV until he was 10, lived in a single-room shack with his parents, sister and two brothers and could barely afford rice, according to an article by Post Magazine. “Pacquiao and his family were poor by the wretched standards of other villagers in Tango,” said the same article.

Whenever I witnessed Pacquiao throw, dodge and absorb punches on HBO pay-per-view, I saw the same qualities many Filipinos needed to overcome the extreme poverty of their homeland: nerve, tenacity and grit. Opponents were typically taller than Pacquiao, who stood at five feet and five inches. Such imbalances were emblematic of the improbable odds he faced in order to reach his current fame and position. Viewers found Pacquiao so inspiring that the boxer’s popularity even won him a Senate seat in the Philippines.

As a result of Covid-19-induced cancellations, however, that unique ability of sports’ to unite, excite and inspire is now halted.

Don’t get me wrong: the United States and the world are rightfully focusing on the utmost important issue of saving lives, controlling the spread of Covid-19 and curbing the economic costs of shutdowns. The suspension of sports is and should be a tertiary, even quaternary issue. But that’s not to say a tangible cost isn’t being incurred by canceling sports. Sure, replays exist, but currently, we can’t marvel in real time as athletes engage in physically, emotionally and psychologically taxing endeavors. We can’t watch as they apply years of highly focused training and, in some contests, operate with little room for error. We can’t draw upon developing storylines that reflect challenges from our own lives, or offer instances of what we didn’t know was possible. We are deprived of sports’ ability to draw communities together, and at a time when, in our respective self-isolated situations, we need it more than ever.

And so I, along with countless other fans, am eagerly anticipating the moment when sports seasons resume. Until then, we ought to draw on the lessons we’ve learned from sports storylines in the past. Some of us who haven’t taken social distancing seriously can turn around our performances today. We can also foster toughness and hope in the face of adversity. Currently, the entire world has entered a match against an invisible and microscopic opponent. To succeed, we ought to act like team players.

*Editor’s Note: Miguel Espinosa ’20 was the 2019-2020 Senior Sports Editor of The Campus. This piece was originally published April 16, 2020.*



# YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN

JAKE GAUGHAN

The title of this article is stolen from an early-pandemic Jacobin essay of the same name written by journalist Alex Press. In it, Press examines the place of literary critic James Wood's "On Not Going Home" in our current pandemic terror. She quotes Wood:

"To think about home and the departure from home, about not going home and no longer feeling able to go home, is to be filled with a remarkable sense of 'afterwardness': it is too late to do anything about it now, and too late to know what should have been done."

For Press, before the pandemic lies the home that we've left. Covid-19 has shown us all the ways that "normal" was inadequate. The fragility of our system was highlighted when the intensive care units filled and the food pantries emptied. We've seen far too much to return to the way things were. For good measure, she adds, "We didn't know we were entering a new era until it arrived."

For most of the Middlebury community, it is pretty easy to point to the minute that we left "home" and entered "afterwardness": about 11:10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 10, when, via a leaked email, we were notified that students would need to evacuate campus by the end of the week.

Echoing Press's observations of broader American society, the ensuing months showed us just how weak our home at Middlebury was. After the announcement, some students retreated to comfortable mansions, or worse, continued with their spring break plans, flying around the world with a level of selfishness that was rivaled only by their idiocy. Others were houseless, sleeping in cars and crashing on couches, their graded coursework an intermediary between their wealthy college and their harsh financial realities.

This divergence of the two Midds continued into the summer. One is traveling across the country to see friends, posting TikToks from the back of a lake boat. The other is working — not interning — putting themselves in harm's way to scrounge up enough money to pitch toward a semester of undiscounted tuition. These inequalities have always existed, and so have the college's failures in addressing them, but now they are inescapable.

Just as inescapable has been the national confrontation of the United States' long, racist history. Press wrote her essay before this summer, a season that will hopefully be stamped in the history books as a turning point in the American consciousness. Millions of Americans taking to the streets to protest an unjust and racist system was another departure from the ignorantly calm "home" we once knew. Middlebury is having its own reckoning, trying — and often failing — to correctly address the

racist history and biased structure of an institution that graduated the first Black college student in the country but that may have thought he was white at the time.

I'm writing this in anticipation of students returning to campus next month and establishing a new normal. It's been endlessly repeated that we will be returning to a Middlebury unlike one we have ever known. The home that we left is no longer there; we cannot return to it.

It is easy to grasp how social distancing measures and restricted movement will physically change our lives at Middlebury. Of course, this is for the best: the pandemic rages on across the country, and the federal government seems resigned to letting it win. At Middlebury, there will be no football games or packed Atwater parties. Dining will be different, as will studying. The biggest change will be in the classroom — or lack thereof.

The success of these measures will rely almost solely on the student body and our willingness to think of someone besides ourselves. Any attempt to return home in this physical regard, whether that be via an off-campus party or dorm room gathering, is an active sabotage of the lives of others. Students have not had the best track record with thoughtful, unselfish decision-making. We cannot return to that. In five years, this fall's return to campus will be remembered in one of two ways: it will either be a cautious gamble that paid off, or it will be the biggest mistake Middlebury College has ever made.

Let's ensure that it is seen as the former and not the latter.

On a communal level, the pandemic and month of June have exposed how our Middlebury home, the one we just left, is not a home for everyone. On top of the ways that our rushed evacuation from campus revealed the unequal playing field of the Middlebury education, over the last month, many students, faculty and staff have poured their hearts out describing the many instances of racism and discrimination they've experienced at the college. The full extent of the college's failure of Black and Brown community members was finally revealed for all to see.

The pandemic has exposed just how flimsily constructed the image of our multicultural, diverse liberal arts college really is. To try to return to the status quo without addressing these issues, without supporting the community members affected, would be an act of malicious cowardice on all of our parts. The mask is off, and to put it back on would be a failure in every regard.

These two homes, the physical and the communal, are inextricably linked. You cannot advocate for a stronger community while acting in a manner that jeopardizes it.

You cannot protect the community in one breath while supporting its destruction in the next.

In her essay, Press writes, "The past had a fog, and we didn't even know it... We face the facts, and in doing so, we transform what came before. We can never go back." When the fall semester begins, all of us — faculty, staff and students — will be tasked with many difficult decisions. Our new normal will require every single person on and around campus to consciously take care of

one another, both in our prevention of an outbreak and in our construction of a better community. This would be a grand departure from the way things were before. We now all know that the old Middlebury wasn't working for everyone — the fog has lifted. There's no excuse for going back.

*Editor's Note: Jake Gaughan '22 is a News Editor for The Campus. This piece was originally published July 28, 2020.*

## GINSBURG'S PASSING

A TRAGEDY FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS

MAX PADILLA

When I received the news that Ruth Bader Ginsburg had passed away on that clear Friday night, I burst into my house, not knowing what to say, tears already streaming down my face. "Mom! Ruth Bader Ginsburg is gone — mom, she died!" Those were the only words to successfully escape my mouth before my brain was flooded with the realization of all we had lost.

Ginsburg was a pioneer, advocating not just for women's rights but for equity among us all. She dedicated her life to this cause, knowing that "real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time." She used her influence to support trailblazers striving towards equity. Even as she neared her ninth decade, she became a cultural icon and a beacon of hope for a younger generation who often found themselves lost in a world unafraid to betray them.

This is a national tragedy, yet it is a tragedy for all the wrong reasons. We should cry for the powerful life that has been taken from us. We should mourn alongside her family, who has lost so much. But the pain and anguish that so many of us feel is driven less by the grief of losing a national hero and instead by the actions of the man with the orange skin who sits behind a desk he has yet to earn. Ginsburg's legacy may be eroded by the ascension of yet another far-right judge whose actions betray the ideals of this nation. Just days before her passing, Ginsburg made it clear that her "most fervent wish is that [she] will not be replaced until a new president is installed."

"I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability. And to help repair tears in her society, to make things a little better through the use of whatever ability she has," Ginsburg said when Irin Carmon, author of "Notorious RBG," asked her how she wanted to be remembered. The best thing that may come out of this tragedy is for her wish to be realized — we owe it to her, and ourselves. The best way to ensure that she

is remembered and that her legacy is preserved is to use the lessons she has taught us to shape the world for the better.

This summer, our nation has endured a long-overdue equal rights movement and an unprecedented pandemic, both ongoing. The murder of George Floyd underscored the systemic racial biases that have brought about surges of protests and continue to consume our everyday lives, but now consistent pressure and action must be taken for justice to be served. Something that Justice Ginsburg knew, "you can't have it all, all at once," is a sentiment now more poignant than ever. To achieve a world that belongs to everyone on this earth, we must fight with every year of our life, the way Notorious RBG fought with every year of hers.

We must be inspired by the woman who led us, as opposed to frightened by what the future might hold. Now, many people fear what the world has become, but we must work, step by step, to ensure the world will become the place she helped us envision. We have now reached a point where in not taking action, we allow others to make the world a bad place for us. To protect our nation, we should live out the lessons that she attempted to teach us. We have all the tools. The struggle is to wield them enduringly.

*Editor's Note: Max Padilla '22 is a Photo Editor for The Campus. This piece was originally published September 24, 2020.*



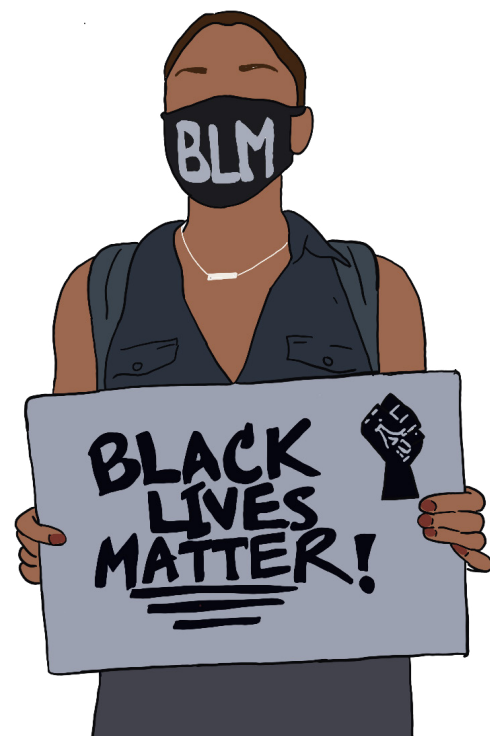


# CAN YOU HEAR US NOW, PRESIDENT PATTON?

KAILA THOMAS & RODNEY ADAMS

Dear President Laurie Patton,  
“Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter!” chant more than 500 voices approaching from a distance on Friday, Sept. 25. Were you to step out onto the street right outside your door, you would be able to see the leadership, solidarity and humanity that Middlebury expects of its students. Along with a quarter of the student population on campus, faculty, staff members, administrators and community members all made the commitment to protest, advocating for the protection and safety of Black Lives, and to denounce the unjust decision made in regard to the fate of the murderers of Breonna Taylor.

You would have heard the speeches of Breanna Moitt '24, from Los Angeles, California; Luka Bowen '22, from Tucson, Arizona — and me, Kaila Thomas '21, from Kennebunk, Maine. We poured our hearts out about how hard it is to be Black in a white space, and about how we wonder where the anti-racism initiatives you promised are this semester. Maybe you would have noticed the cheers of approval following what we said, and the excitement when I asked everybody to line up, socially distanced, to march and chant on the bridge. You would have been there for the moment of silence that followed.



And this is where Rodney's story begins.

I'm Rodney Adams '21 from Dorchester, Massachusetts. Around 10 p.m. on that same Friday, I was talking about my day with my best friend Jameel Uddin, acknowledging my peers' success in organizing a peaceful protest. We talked about how proud we were of ourselves for attending, but also how hopeful we were for the Middlebury community.

Seconds later, we stepped out of my car and were reduced to just “n\*\*\*\*\*” by a white male student — and a bystanding white male did nothing to stop it. As a Black man, I knew they wanted me to throw everything away, provoking me to forfeit my livelihood. But I was raised by a Black family who practiced love in the face of hate. Looking right in front of me, I saw an evil that so many Black Americans face; a reality I was taught to expect while knowing that those two white men will never be subject to the same circumstances.

“OVERWHELMED WITH  
EMOTION — PAIN, HURT AND ANGER  
— I WALKED AWAY KNOWING MY  
POWER AS A BLACK MAN. THE  
ENTIRE MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY  
IMMEDIATELY CAME TO MY SIDE;  
MY FELLOW CLASSMATES, MY  
COWORKERS AT THE GRILLE AND THE  
CCI, ALUMNI AND FACULTY.”

RODNEY ADAMS '21

Overwhelmed with emotion — pain, hurt and anger — I walked away knowing my power as a Black man. The entire Middlebury community immediately came to my side; my fellow classmates, my coworkers at the Grille and the CCI, alumni and faculty.

Almost everyone but you.

It is time to step out of the Twilight years. The last definitive action toward racial equity Middlebury took was 197 years ago when they allowed a Black man to graduate from this institution. And at the time they had no understanding of this “progressive” act, since they did not know he was Black until after he was admitted. The distance from College Park to your stairs is merely a few steps, but there are so many more steps that need to be taken in order to decrease the distance from yourself and the Black community here at Middlebury. We do see more Black faces on campus; however, representation

“THE LAST DEFINITIVE ACTION  
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TOOK WAS 197 YEARS AGO WHEN  
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means nothing if there is still a culture actively working against our identities.

We want an explanation as to why you were not in attendance at the march in solidarity with Black lives, why you did not recognize the accomplishments of the college community, and why you failed to acknowledge the implications of a racially charged incident that same night in a timely manner.

We want to elevate Black voices.

We want you to continuously and actively support the Black community.

We want a Black PubSafe officer.

We want a Black Studies Program with an expanded course selection and a course catalog that represents the diverse contributions we have made to this world.

We want a Black faculty & staff recruitment program.

We want a working body composed of Black students who are compensated for helping create anti-racism programming on this campus that will annually assess and review the school's commitment to an anti-racist framework, working closely alongside the Senior

Leadership Group.

We want a detailed outline of the plans for the \$500,000 Anti-Racism Fund. We want a required annual anti-bias training session for all students, faculty and staff to be completed before arrival on campus.

We want the Community Bias Response Team to achieve its intended purpose and to not just be performative.

We want students involved in discriminatory harassment cases to be required to complete an anti-racist workshop. Education and reflection must be implemented as a consequence to these incidents.

We expect a timely response to this open letter with real answers and actions to back up our questions and requests. As Angela Davis courageously said, “You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”

Sincerely,  
Kaila Thomas '21 and Rodney Adams '21

*Editor's Note: Kaila Thomas and Rodney Adams are members of the class of 2021. This piece was originally published October 1, 2020. An update on its demands can be found on page 74.*





# RUMINATIONS OF A HUMAN BEING

## SYSTEMATIC RACISM, POLICE BRUTALITY AND AMERICA'S FAILURE TO TEACH EMPATHY

MARTIN WILLIAMS

The first time I remember experiencing racism was in the first grade during lunch. Two second-graders started picking on me for being Black. The bullying started out with comments about the color of my skin, which then escalated after a few days to them tying up my sweater so that I couldn't put my hands through them, taking my food and calling me their slave whenever they saw me.

I remember being confused because I didn't understand why my race was a problem. I was one of three Black students in my grade at the private elementary school I attended. I started there in pre-K and did not see myself as different from my white classmates until this moment. My heart races when I think back to that time.

When the teachers finally stepped in, they kept the incident quiet. As a result, none of my peers learned from this, which only reinforced their perception that racism was something that happened in history books and in places outside of their community.

Some white people learn how to deny or downplay the existence of racism in our society by believing that since their grass is green, coffers are full and status is maintained, all is well in the world. As a result, they believe that anyone who states otherwise is being over-dramatic or outright lying. These white people cling to the small number of Black people that support their views, such as Candace Owens, Walter Blackman and Allen West, and try to weaponize their experiences in this country by pointing to them as representatives for all Black people.

They use coded language to bog down conversations on issues of systemic racism, police reforms and legal reforms. They fight reforms and hide their racist opinions by coyly demanding we respect states' rights, individuals' free speech and "the rule of law," as though their freedom of expression justifies infringing on the rights of tens of millions of Black citizens.

They support the vast authority and judicial protection that police officers are guaranteed in this country. However, they do not question the embarrassingly simple requirements (high school diploma or GED and no felony conviction) or the short duration of training necessary (between 13 weeks to six months) to become a police officer.

Why are cops allowed to be judge, jury and executioner?

These white people excuse police brutality against unarmed Black people, claiming the cops were "scared," "made a mistake" or "misinterpreted a situation." They

will shout, "ALL LIVES MATTER," avoid eye contact or keep their mouths shut in tacit support of police brutality. However, they don't stop to think about the mother, father, son, daughter, friend or mentor killed by the cops' "fear" or "mistake." They treat the death of the victim as insignificant, although they would be enraged and desire justice too, if a cop murdered their loved one.

If anyone is to kill or commit any violent act against someone that is unarmed, defenseless or vulnerable, they should be held accountable. As cops, because they are there to protect the community, they should be held to a higher standard and should receive harsher consequences when they inflict terror and death on people. Too often do we see them walk away from the situation and have the opportunity to experience the joys of life, while the victims rot and fade from people's memories like Terence Crutcher, Akai Gurley, Eric Garner, Philando Castile and Sam Dubose.

These white people don't think about the perpetual fear millions of Black people feel about the unpredictability of interactions with the police. They don't think about how millions of Black parents have to give their young sons and daughters talks on being extra submissive in any situation with a police officer.

They just tell us to suck it up.

They just tell us it's our reality.

They tell us that the justice system will right the numerous wrongs of the country, even though the justice system has been shown to be biased against Black people.

How is that fair?

How is that justice?

Cops that commit acts of brutality and murder — and the people who continue to defend them — are ensuring that I will have to fear for my children's safety one day as my parents fear for mine. Those that believe inaction or maintaining the system is a valiant cause are culpable of thousands of deaths and injuries from police brutality. Their support has allowed for these actions to persist, and the blood of thousands of Black people will continue to stain their hands as long as Black people are denied equality in practice.

*Editor's Note: Martin Williams is a member of the class of 2020. This piece was originally published July 4, 2020.*

# AUTOMATICALLY SUSPECT

## BEING BLACK IN AMERICA

KEMI FUENTES-GEORGE

The most recent time I was stopped and harassed by police was shortly after I moved into the house that my wife and I bought in Middlebury. Perhaps a month after we moved in, I decided to finally go check out that adorable little library a short ways down the street, right near the alpaca farm, the playground and across from the residents who make and sell maple syrup from their house. I remember walking down Main Street and — right before entering the library — seeing the cop car drive past and do a U-turn. And, sure enough, a few moments after I sat down in the library, after I greeted the charming, elderly librarian, after I picked up whichever graphic novel caught my eye, the cop followed me in. Then came the usual: "I need to see your ID sir, we've had reports of suspicious behavior," and various other rationalizations.

As usual, I gave the cop my ID. As usual, he called it in. As usual, there was a moment of panic, where I wondered if this was the time there would be a case of mistaken identity, and I would get hauled off to jail, something which also very nearly happened to Clarence Evans. Fortunately, luck was on my side this time, and the cop left. The librarian, who witnessed all this, was almost as angry as I was. On the walk back home, I passed another neighbor, a white woman, standing outside a home. We started chatting, and I told her about what had just happened. This dark look came in her eyes, and she said, "Yeah, they've been doing that a lot to the Black guys who live in this house too." I'll bet.

That incident meant that I've been harassed, stopped and questioned by cops in every single state that I've lived in for more than four months. A part of me wondered, "What constitutes suspicious behavior in walking to the library?" But not really. After all, the things I've done that have warranted being stopped and questioned (besides a neighborhood reading stroll) include:

Waiting for a pizza delivery.

Standing beside my friend as she took money out of the ATM.

Taking my own money out of the ATM.

Riding as a passenger in the car of a white woman.

Jumping rope outside.

My experience could certainly have been worse. That same month I was harassed while waiting for pizza, a friend of mine called to report a prowler outside his window — and when the cops showed up, they maced, tackled and handcuffed him. Perspective is important. But the reality is that to be Black is to exist under a perpetual cloud of suspicion.

Our bodies are suspect, which means we can't do certain mundane things without risk. Can't purchase a BB gun from a store that sells BB guns. Can't sell loose leaf cigarettes. Can't go to the window if you hear a suspicious noise outside. All of those things could be a death sentence. Our minds and intellects are also suspect. Can't work your ass off, scrape together funding and scholarships and go to one of the best colleges in America without having some white students, white administrators and white professors treat "Blacks and

“BUT GEORGE FLOYD WILL  
FOREVER BE 46. WHEN I THINK  
ABOUT IT, I CAN'T BREATHE.”

Latinos are genetically stupider than white people" as Legitimate Scholarly Inquiry™.

In my first draft of this essay, I started with "The last time I got stopped and harassed by police..." but I only hope it's the last time. As Tamir Rice (if he wasn't already killed) or Marvia Gray (assuming she's not still traumatized) could have told you, as long as you're Black in America, you're never too old or too young to be under suspicion. George Floyd was killed at 46, which is only a few years older than me. With any luck, I'll keep going for decades more yet.

But George Floyd will forever be 46. When I think about it, I can't breathe.

*Editor's Note: Kemi Fuentes-George is a professor of political science at Middlebury. This piece was originally published June 15, 2020.*



# 2020 IN 100 WORDS

## Charlotte Crutchlow

In mid-July, I was in a slump. I was angry at Covid, the lockdowns and the entire world. One night, I answered my door and saw my best friend standing there with her car keys and a bag of Sour Patch Kids. We were going to see the sunset, she said; it was non-negotiable. After I reluctantly got in the car, we drove to a nearby park, laid a couple beach towels on a patch of grass, and waited. About 20 minutes later came the most incredible sunset I've ever seen. Looking up at that sky, I felt alive again.



## Haley Hutchinson

Whether it be the pounding salty waves of the Pacific Ocean or the sterile clear of a tiled pool steaming with ribbons of chlorine in the wee hours of the morning, the water always brings with it a sense of calm; a reminder of my appreciation for its ebbs and flows and my love for swimming. But when pools remained shut down throughout the Covid pandemic, I had to find another way to connect with the water. A forgotten pond surrounded by grazing horses and orchards became my solace. I came to appreciate its algae greenery and the minnow schools that flitted about. And even when I returned to the natatorium on campus in the fall, I missed that little pond and the comfort it provided during those strange summer months of 2020.

## Yardena Carmi

A week before being sent home in March, I went to a Middlebury College Organic Farm workshop on brewing ginger beer. Later, when faced with an unexpected wealth of free time, I knew what to do. After a couple weeks of weird odors and regular feedings, I produced a lively ginger bug (a living culture of wild yeast grown in a mix of ginger, sugar and water) that kept me company the whole summer. I brewed gallons of homemade soda at a time, experimenting with different fruit juices and spices. Some batches, left to ferment for too long, tragically turned to alcohol.



## Michael Segel

A friend from home and I had both been stuck inside for a few weeks and needed something to do, so we decided to meet at a beach near my house. Out of nowhere, we began skipping rocks. This must have gone on for some 15 minutes. There was something therapeutic in repeatedly searching for flat rocks and seeing how far we could skip them. Little things like this helped me reconnect with nature and pass time when I was really looking for things to do.



## Charlie Deichman-Caswell

Entering quarantine sometime last March, I made a choice. I was going to grow the most lush, sumptuous, magnificent, Ron Burgundy-level mustache ever seen. Naturally, my journey to bewhiskered brilliance took me until mid-April, at which point I at last sported the facial hair of fantasy, a magical mustache with professedly paranormal properties. It was an entity in itself; a living, breathing organism with dreams and emotions. But alas my stunning 'stache met its demise in July when I accidentally glanced at a mirror and saw my mistake.

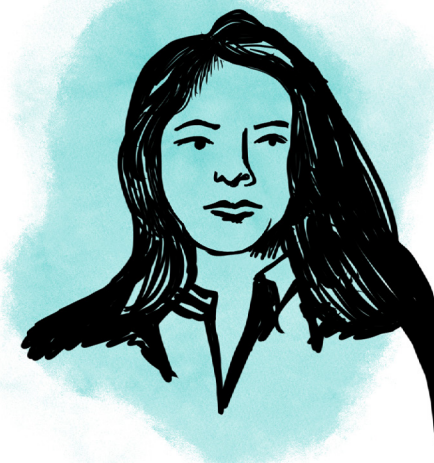


## Julia Pepper

I've been going to Prospect Park my whole life. There are photos of me in red rainboots, stomping in puddles beside my grandparents. When I went there with friends in March I had no idea that I'd just finished my last normal day of high school. Sometimes reassuring and other times stressful, crowds in the park show how many New Yorkers have made it their haven. Over the last year I've gone on hot sunny walks and windy cold ones. I've run the park loop, sat on its benches and picnicked on its grass. The park has been a constant during uncertain times.

## Roya Touran

One of the things I miss about pre-Covid life is driving to music with friends. One day, my friend Kate and I needed to pick up food during a distanced hangout. We had to be in separate cars but decided to put all our windows down and play Fleetwood Mac's "Rumors" at the exact same time. We drove side by side, singing every word to each other through the car window and dancing at every red light. We got the strangest stares at stops. I would've hated us too, but it was truly the happiest I'd felt since the start of quarantine.



## Edyth Moldow

There's something about quarantine that truly makes you believe that caution belongs to the wind. On a folk music kick, I purchased a banjo from eBay and taught myself how to play it, though I focused primarily on "Wish You Were Here" by Pink Floyd. Rock music on a bluegrass instrument never sounded so... well, it still needs work. The point is that 2020 inspired me to learn something new, something avant-garde, and take quarantine-blues into my own hands. Literally.



# GOODBYE

REGINA FONTANELLI

“I don’t want to say goodbye,” he whispered. It was Saturday, the night before I left. His room looked exactly like it always did at the end of a long week: a desk covered in mugs filled with half-eaten oatmeal, a pile of clothes on the rocking chair, an overstuffed trash bin. He’s generally a tidy person so this would usually distress him, but tonight we ignore it. Instead, we focus on the fairy lights strung to his ceiling, the smell of eucalyptus from the humidifier and the way Middlebury actually feels kind of peaceful with no one around.

We’re lying by the window, holding each other like it’s the end because it sort of is. Even though we’re both sophomores, we’ve both committed to a full year of studying abroad. I’m from Brooklyn. He’s from Turkey, 5,000 miles away. It’s unlikely that we’ll see each other until our senior years. We both knew this was coming eventually, but it was always abstract, something to worry about later.

We met in the Abernethy Room. I was sitting on one red couch, he was on the other. I didn’t notice him, too busy working on my “broke brooklyn bltch!” blog that I was sure was going to be a huge success, when he sauntered up to me, looking like a quirky side-character on a Netflix show.

“Hellooooo, I’m Ege,” he chimed.

Intrigued by this strange, gentle boy with his long lashes and direct manner, I closed my laptop.

“Hi, I’m Regina,” I said, smiling.

As it turned out, we not only lived in the same building, but he had class with one of my Posse-mates and knew my roommate and so on and so on. Before we knew it, we became best friends, kissed drunk, started dating, blah blah blah. You’ve seen a rom-com; you know how the story goes.

Still, I never saw it coming. Ege just wasn’t the kind of person I saw myself falling in love with. He listened to indie music, read historical nonfiction by choice and opened Wikipedia on the toilet instead of Instagram. I, on the other hand, am literally falling asleep just writing those things. I never thought we’d last as long as we have.

Then this fall, our

relationship took a step forward in a much more serious direction. After an especially depleting, slightly traumatizing summer, I came back to start my sophomore year not with the energy of a peppy first year, ready to take on the world, but as a tired and scared 20-year-old. Our first week back for Res Life training I tried to break up with him, convinced that I was too broken to continue a serious relationship. He refused.

“I want to be there for you,” Ege said.

I cried into his shoulder and he held me in that moment the way he would continue to hold me for the next few months as I lost my home, my cat, my sense of security in the world. He held my hand walking to therapy and emotionally held me when I needed it most.

On the day Middlebury announced we would be sent home, I was thinking about how my spring semester was off to a shockingly bright start after so many hard months. How fortunate I was for all the people that helped me start feeling like myself again — Ege being a very big part of that.

This was supposed to be our spring, our few months of peace before saying goodbye. I wanted to give him these months of peace, of “happy college couple” time, but I couldn’t. What makes me love him even more is that he never wanted or expected any of that from me.

The morning after our last night, he helped me carry all my poorly-packed boxes to my aunt’s Honda. I was going to New York and he was going to stay on campus, at least until something better came along or he had to go home. Seconds before my aunt pulled up, we were sitting on my windowsill recounting the things we loved about the other. His eyes were teary, the same gentle boy I met over a year ago on the red couch in Axinn.

He helped me load the last of my boxes and we hugged, too shy to kiss goodbye under the watchful eye of my Catholic aunt. But he managed to hand me one thing before we drove off: Zucchini, the stuffed cat he had given me for my 21st birthday after I was forced to give my real one away. I held onto one little paw as the packed car pulled away, watching Ege from the window for as long as I could. He stood there the whole time, watching the distance grow between us.

*Editor’s Note: Regina Fontanelli is a member of the class of 2022. This article was originally published in the April 2020 Love Issue.*

# ROOM TO BREATHE

RAIN JI

I went through a breakup right after Feb break. I promise I don’t intend to use The Campus as Tinder. I just want to share some reflections from my experience dealing with sadness at this insanely busy place (now, figuratively).

The break up happened on a Tuesday night. My agenda for the night included finishing newspaper layout, conjugating Arabic verbs and converting Cartesian coordinates. Dealing with grief was not included. Rather than feel sad, I intended to drown myself with work as a distraction.

It worked. Well, kind of. Wednesday through Friday, my friends and I chatted about stupid TV shows, upcoming primary elections and the weather — typical topics. (Looking back now, I miss in-person communications so much.) Whenever my friends checked in with me about the breakup, I said, “I’m over it.” Still, they seemed concerned, wanting to know if I was truly all right and offering to talk if I needed to. In response, I simply waved my hands and joked about being a strong and independent woman.

I thought I would be able to pretend nothing was wrong forever. Fake it ‘til you make it, as people say.

And yet, unfortunately and fortunately, my body finally gave out that weekend, exhausted. It was not the kind of exhaustion which follows a 10k run, but rather emotional fatigue. I could barely feel anything. When I tried to talk, a mixture of Chinese and English nonsense would come out, something that tends to happen when I am extremely upset. The more I tried to pretend I wasn’t sad, the more my sorrow festered inside until eventually, while I was trying to print readings for class, the pages fell from my hands scattered everywhere on the Davis floor. I started crying right there, in front of the printer. The person behind me was shocked. Still, they quietly helped me gather the reading and whispered, “It gets better.” (Even though I never learned your name, kind printer person, I’d like to thank you.)

That’s when I was forced to come face-to-face with my feelings. I recognized how unhealthy my coping mechanisms up until that point had been. I mean, I wasn’t even coping, I was only feigning being okay.

And so I decided to spend some time alone. Even knowing it would be helpful in the long run, I felt guilty canceling plans with friends. Would they be disappointed if I told them I needed more time to figure out my emotions about my past relationship? What if they thought I was dramatic and

weak? No one did. Instead, I got hugs and sweet texts containing words of comfort.

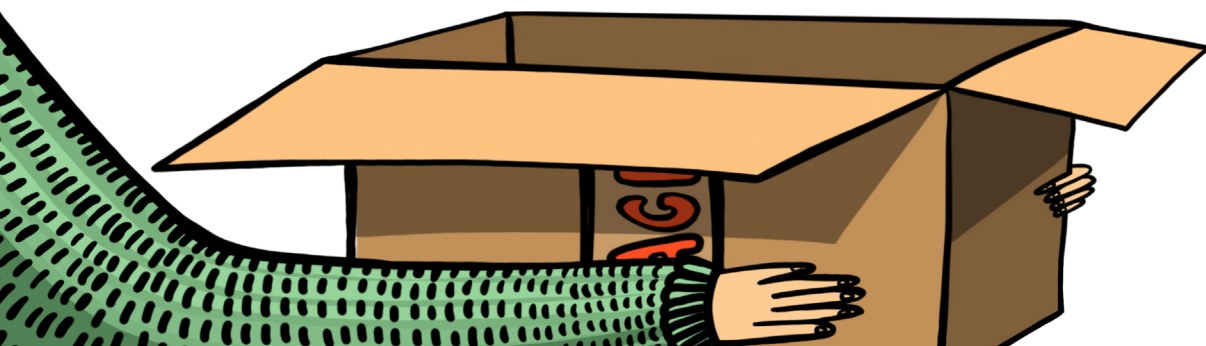
That was the hardest, most rewarding weekend I have ever had. I tried new things: I spent hours listening to podcasts, attended my first ever spin class and went on an aimless, spontaneous walk. Scariest of all, I did all of these activities solo. As I watched “Criminal Minds” alone on Saturday night, I wondered if I was missing out on what could’ve been the best night of the week. And then I realized, I was having the best time. Solitude is not shameful. In fact, often it is enjoyable. (Thanks to that experience, self-quarantine for 14 days at a medical facility upon my return home a month ago became a lot easier).

The following night, I attended an editorial meeting where we discussed how some people don’t enjoy J-Term, and I realized that I wasn’t the only one who was obsessed with being engaged in a variety of activities and to being constantly busy. That night, I learned that other Middlebury students also had those wishes, and that they led to more pressure and stress. It seemed that I finally found the reason behind my stubborn determination to hide my pain. I mistakenly felt that I should have been ashamed of my misery since I was supposed to be enjoying myself like everyone else around me. But then, I thought, what if that’s why people around me are only showing happy and smiley faces instead of those of stress and worry?

As cliché as it sounds, I think sometimes we all need a reminder that we are entitled to our feelings. In the wake of my breakup, I felt anger, shame and guilt. I was too afraid to confront these emotions because I didn’t want to admit to others that I was an emotional wreck. It took an awkward encounter with a stranger to shatter my facade; still, the facade didn’t have to be put on in the first place.

I’m not suggesting that there is a linear healing process to sadness, because there isn’t. As my math professor has told me on several occasions, linear things are nice, but they rarely exist. I still feel doleful every so often. But, when I do, I stand up to those feelings with strength gained from a mixture of company and solitude. By allocating time for myself, I allow others to help me. By allowing myself to feel bad, I allow myself to feel better.

*Editor’s Note: Rain Ji ’23 was the fall 2020 Senior Arts & Culture Editor for The Campus. This article was originally published in the April 2020 Love Issue.*







# MASK OFF, MIDD

MARIA KAOURIS

*MASK OFF, MIDD is a column by Maria Kaouris '21. Each week, she explores topics of romance and intimacy during the era of Covid-19. These pieces were published in the April 2020 Love Issue and on October 8, 2020, respectively.*

## HEY MIDD, U UP? OTHER SCHOOLS DON'T HOOK UP LIKE WE DO

Two months into my first year at Middlebury, I got mono.

It was... well-deserved. (Sorry, mom.)

During the day, I was intimate with my essays and readings, delicately stapling printouts and color-coded notes. On weekends, I wasted my time at parties kissing guys who, after sticking their tongues down my throat, would lean in and whisper, “Hang on. Gotta piss.” Classy, I know.

One night stands should not exist at Middlebury. Frankly, the framework that underpins casual sex is incompatible with Midd’s whopping 2,500 students (give or take a few). Small colleges prevent anonymity — a staple of random hookups elsewhere — and muddle otherwise impersonal sex with interconnected, complicated social undercurrents. At Middlebury, both casual and committed relationships are limited by friendship dynamics and calling arbitrary dibs on class crushes, but these situations persist anyway.

Many claim Midd is a relationship school, citing the recycled admissions statistic that 60% of alums marry each other (the real number stands at 17%, although I’m willing to believe in fairytales if you are). I admit, there are pockets of committed couples (see: much of my friend group). An arguably more relevant dialogue, however, deals with “pseudo-relationships,” a term coined by Leah Fessler ’15 in her thesis, “Can She Really ‘Play that Game Too?’” Fessler uses “pseudo-relationships” to refer to partners continuously hooking up, oftentimes only with each other, without commitment or emotional investment. Of the 75 Midd students polled, Fessler found only 8% of women surveyed were satisfied in their pseudo-relationships. The majority of male respondents also felt insecure in ambiguous romantic arrangements; despite favoring committed relationships, most men felt their masculinity was judged on the number and attractiveness of their partners. And yet, in an environment where relationships are stunted by booze, insecurities and a rigid social life structure, no one feels comfortable asking the “what are we?” question, much less answering it.

This past fall, I studied abroad at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Compared to Middlebury, St. Andrews is a traditional relationship school; there is a distinct “get to know you” culture centered around (relatively) sober courting. Most refreshingly, I went the

entire semester without hearing the phrase “Snapchat message.”

I refuse to believe that I magically became more appealing the minute I went abroad. Sure, I had a “cute” American accent, but I was still loud and bad with rules; these tendencies are wholly un-Scottish, which is why it surprised me that I was disproportionately (not to mention soberly) pursued across the pond.

Unlike Americans, Scots and Brits do not walk on eggshells. There is little space for Middlebury-esque pseudo-relationships in a culture that barely tolerates ambiguity. Once, a British guy I was seeing felt compelled to inform me that he had enjoyed getting to know me but solely wanted a physical connection. Although I liked him and was bummed, at least I wasn’t left wondering how he felt. When we consequently broke things off, it was cordial.

By comparison, defining relationships at Midd becomes a painstaking process of obscuring and ignoring emotions (or the lack thereof). To this date, my personal favorite euphemism for “I just want to sleep with you” — which I received from a male friend during my second year of college — remains, “I’m in love with you but have a lot on my plate, so let’s hook up and talk about it after.” Good one.

To be fair, it isn’t entirely Middlebury’s fault. In many ways, St. Andrews has superior dating conditions: a larger student body, more cafés, a drinking age that permits controlled alcohol consumption in pubs or bars. Still, just like Midd, the town itself is a “bubble,” and so should theoretically incubate the lack of romantic privacy we say prevents “traditional dating” at Midd. And yet it doesn’t.

Hook-up culture is not an inevitable product of 20-something-year-olds, hormones and empty beds. We’ve created it.

The shortcomings of Middlebury’s romantic environment have more to do with the current, limited dialogue surrounding intimacy than an explicit desire for commitment. This is a loss: no matter how casual a fling, everyone wants to be respected. We might take a page out of the Scottish playbook. There is something undeniably sexy about being honest about what you want.

# I QUARANTINE DATED CASPER THE GHOST

He had that je ne sais quoi of a boy who refused to wear his retainer after he got his braces off.

I had always admired him from afar, watching him run fingers through his locks like a sixth grader with gum in his hair. To the untrained eye, it may have looked like nonchalance. To me, however, it was an ostensible performance, one I could identify only because I did it too.

I would observe him conspicuously, eyes trailing his outline, which was often enveloped by joggers and sweatpants. My speaking crescendoed when he was near, a subconscious attempt to draw him into my orbit. Save for a stolen glance in a narrow hallway of Warner last spring, we remained strangers, native to corners of campus that seldom overlapped.

And then, when we got sent home for Covid, I found his name lighting up my phone screen.

*“Although we never formally met, I wish we could’ve talked at Midd. You looked beautiful when we ran into each other in Warner,”* read the text.

With that began my quarantine love affair.

We quickly fell into four-and-a-half-hour phone calls, a duet of laughs that closed the 40 miles between us. Ebbing and flowing, our voices barely made it above a whisper in the early morning hours, either making up for lost time on campus or, just as likely, filling the pandemic’s uncertainty with the familiarity of Middlebury.

*“The only thing getting me through quarantine, Maria, is knowing I can see you on the other side. I just want to kiss you.”*

I had a particular certainty about him, a sense of security rooted in the “will-bes” of our newfound bond rather than the “what-ifs” of our missed connection on campus.

And then, he went silent. A simple read receipt on my last text. When I called, he never picked up.

I like to consider myself a socially adjusted individual (we should, however, leave that judgement to the masses), but I have never understood the all-too-common phenomenon of ghosting — an extreme expression of interest followed by an unexplained vanishing. There are few situations in which a healthy relationship, whether romantic or platonic, requires an abrupt cutting of ties.

And yet, many of us have been ghosted.

The logic is counterintuitive — in an era when our phones seem to be extensions of our hands, shouldn’t we have more opportunities to communicate our romantic interest (or lack thereof) to someone? Interestingly, the media platforms intended to connect us (Instagram, Snapchat, the list goes on...) actually facilitate the severing of our relationships. While our parents’ generation largely rejected love interests by having “the

conversation,” that strategy has since been suffocated by read receipts and slow response times (is he a bad texter or is he not into me?).

Now, more than ever, people can flit in and out of our lives with neither accountability nor an explanation. On top of this, Covid has increased the acceptance of internet connections (there is certainly less Tinder stigma nowadays), and raised the stakes of our conversations. With decreased concern about running into the person you’re talking to (or, perhaps, not even recognizing them with a mask on), some of the anxiety that usually plagues these connections is removed.

**“BUT SOMETHING I’VE BEEN LEARNING OVER QUARANTINE IS THAT ROMANCE ISN’T CLEAR. THERE’S GRAY SPACE AND EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE AND INSECURITY. SOMETIMES, YOU DON’T GET TO READ THE LAST PAGE OF THE BOOK BECAUSE SOMEONE RIPPED IT OUT FIRST.”**

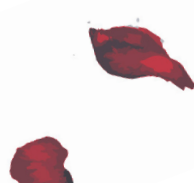
On one hand, this can be liberating. On the other hand, cues that would typically exist in person are lost in cyberspace. For those who opt for the I’m-going-to-pretend-like-I-want-to-date-you-and-then-disappear strategy, this creates the perfect context for tapping out of our lives without explanation.

In such ambiguous experiences, how can we glean closure?

In truth, I am someone who loves to tie everything up into a little bow, and I usually opt for directness in all of my relationships (this is not to say, however, that I have not avoided important, oftentimes awkward, discussions).

But something I’ve been learning over quarantine is that romance isn’t clear. There’s gray space and emotional baggage and insecurity. Sometimes, you don’t get to read the last page of the book because someone ripped it out first. When faced with people who play disappearing acts, perhaps it has less to do with us, and more to do with how those people handle relationships. And if, somehow, we squeeze an explanation out of a ghost, it probably won’t be an honest one.

MASK OFF, MIDD: Don’t let the ghosts scare you.





# IN MY ROOM

RACHEL ROSE

“Do my dreaming and my scheming/ Lie awake and pray/ Do my crying and my sighing/ Laugh at yesterday...” These are the lyrics from “In My Room,” one of my favorite songs by the Beach Boys. I’d say they feel especially fitting during this period of quarantine, where my room is the place I’ve processed a lot of thoughts and feelings in the last month.

Now, back at my childhood post, I think about the first day of freshman year. As I was hugging my parents goodbye, I remember saying, “It’ll be totally fine but, just thought I should put it out there that I’m realizing I’m not made for college. I think we can all agree I’m more of a homebody, right?” My parents just smiled and pretended like they didn’t hear me. But seriously, college was something unlike anything I had experienced before. College was a place where you lived and breathed among 18-to-22-year-olds, where you had to actively search for a person significantly older than you among a sea of recognizable faces. Three years ago, that was a terrifying scenario. Since then, it has become an environment I find thrilling — one I’ve found myself craving when I’m not in it.



In fact, I’ve become so dependent on campus life that the idea of coming home for an indeterminate amount of time and switching to the online school of the Covid era was daunting. How would I function without the subtle but steady stream of adrenaline that rolls through me during the day-to-day in Middlebury, Vermont? How could I replicate the heartbeat of the college experience? Closing my laptop at the end of a Zoom class doesn’t

give me nearly as much satisfaction as walking out of the classroom with a friend, bikes and skateboards whizzing by as we chat on our way to Atwater for lunch. My lunch break now consists of walking 10 steps to the kitchen and, if I’m lucky, running into a family member. Otherwise, I just munch for half an hour and turn back to my computer. I acknowledge that I am so lucky and so privileged to go back to the home I have, especially during this pandemic when many aren’t as fortunate. Still, as is true whenever I’m stuck at home for more than a few days, I’ve felt more and more melancholy.

One night, 10 or so days into quarantining, I (with wine in hand) spontaneously committed to learning the Tiktok dance to Ciara’s “Get Up.” After two hours, I was tipsy, sweaty and laughing at myself. Looking in the mirror, I realized I was having a really good time. Somehow, I felt guilty. I was confused, surprised at feeling good and having fun all by myself.

I’ve had similar experiences since then: I catch myself feeling really content, not just content but truly happy — I find myself grinning at a line in a book, laughing really hard at a meme, wiping sweat off my chin at the tail end of a run, catching my reflection in the mirror, exclaiming at how delicious the first bite of my lunch is, flailing around my room and yelling with the music that’s only playing in my AirPods. Grinning so wide! I catch myself and wonder, am I going crazy? Having such a good time wasn’t something I thought possible under these circumstances. I’ve always spent plenty of time alone, but looking back, I didn’t appreciate what it had to offer — slower living and clearer thinking. Solitude always seemed to serve as more of a recharge, a time to daydream in between being around other people, my face-to-face sources of validation and fun. I’ll admit that I’m not currently working my way up to a hundred push-ups, learning a new language, or starting a book club like so many people seem to be on Instagram. Instead, I’m catching glimmers of bliss during ordinary moments of self.

During those moments, my heart beats faster and louder. I hear that other voice in my head — not the one that whispers insecurities, regrets, or doubts — growing into something steady, starting to sing. Telling me I am living well, that I can trust myself to make life joyous right now, by myself, in my room.

*Editor’s Note: Rachel Rose is a member of the class of 2021. This piece was originally published in the April 2020 Love Issue.*

# I WAS ONE OF THE TWO ON-CAMPUS COVID-19 CASES

HERE’S WHAT I WANT YOU TO KNOW

ANONYMOUS

If you have recently taken a look at the Covid-19 Reporting Dashboard, you may have noticed that there are currently no active cases at Middlebury — this means that I am out. I was the second identified Covid-19 case at Middlebury.

I was hesitant to write this out of fear that it might reveal who I am; some may already know or have guesses based on rumors. After being released from isolation, however, the sight of maskless students and large gatherings urged me to share my experience — to take the risk and speak up. So, even though we are inundated with messages from the administration about campus safety, I hope this article comes across not as a rant but as a message from a concerned peer who wants to offer a different insight into the social, personal aspect of isolation and quarantine.

Besides dealing with the physical symptoms of fatigue, loss of taste and smell and joint pains, the biggest challenge I faced during quarantine was loneliness and anxiety. The irritating creaks of floorboards filled the vacant hallways of Munford while intrusive thoughts occupied my already confused mind.

What if I spread it to people? How do I tell my friends that they may have been exposed? What if they shun me even after I recover? Will I recover? How will people perceive me when I go back? Will they eventually find out? These questions only intensified my self-consciousness and anxiety — so much so that I would sometimes spend an entire day behind closed blinds to avoid being seen by students who pass by.

Even though I tend to enjoy solitude and seclusion, being separated from my friends that I’d been yearning to see and from the campus that I’ve been dreaming to walk on transformed my quarantine into a physically and emotionally taxing experience.



Frankly, even after being discharged, I am still nervous to be on campus. Even though recovering from Covid-19 should be cause for celebration, I returned to campus with a dirty and shameful secret. I even waited until the sun set on the day I left Munford, using the cover of the night to return to my room.



We may be a little too complacent in the Middlebury bubble, deceiving ourselves with a false sense of security. But remember, bubbles burst. We are dangerously underestimating the spread of the virus, which can and will threaten everyone’s right to enjoy their time at Middlebury.

Isolation — coupled with its physiological struggles — is an excruciating and debilitating process. I do not want anyone else to go through what I just went through. Though it may be wishful thinking, I sincerely hope to be the last case at Middlebury.

As a student, I recognize that snitching or calling people out may not be comfortable. We convince ourselves that those awkward conversations will damage relationships and mark us as killjoys, especially if we confront our own friends. However, by reminding our peers to practice social distancing and follow safety protocols, we are protecting each other from separation and isolation. So, if you cherish your time with friends, your spontaneous walks to The Knoll or whatever gives you joy on campus, remember that overcoming the discomfort to advocate for campus safety and accountability is worth it save this semester — and possibly save a life.

*Editor’s Note: The author of this piece was granted anonymity to protect their privacy. It was originally published September 17, 2020.*





## CAN WE PLEASE STOP TALKING ABOUT OUR QUARANTINE WEIGHT?

SOPHIE CLARK

I got lucky with Covid. I only lost my senses of taste and smell for a month. Last week when I told this to a friend, her first reaction was, “Did you lose weight? If I couldn’t taste anything, I simply wouldn’t eat.” And — as much as I wanted to respond with, “I was more preoccupied with the terror of having the coronavirus” — I couldn’t because, well, she was right. No senses meant no appetite, and I thought that was great.

Please do not take that paragraph as a lesson. It is SO messed up that my first reaction to having a potentially deadly illness was that I could lose a few pounds. It also reflects the brutal influence of growing up for 22 years in a culture fixated on the false pretense that size equals success.

Now that we’re back on campus, this fixation on weight is even more glaring. I don’t know about you, but I’ve had this conversation at least 10 times now:

“Hey, how was your quarantine?”

“It was fine but ugh, I totally gained so much weight.”

“Me too, yikes. The Covid Fifteen, am I right?”

It’s understandable, of course. We’ve been stuck inside with our bodies, trapped in an inescapable mental and physical hell with only our own reflections for comfort and ire for the last six months. Of course we’re going to fixate on what we look like. But do we have nothing else to say to our friends? Nothing?

Are we, the so-called “liberal-arts-outside-the-box-thinkers,” so stuck in this obsession with our physical forms that we can’t imagine a world outside of our bodies? There must be a way that we can take everything this school has taught us about reimagining the world around us and apply it to our friends and to ourselves.

Let’s have conversations about how we’re actually doing. Some of us got sick. Some of us lost loved ones. Some of us were living in the epicenter of a social revolution. We need our friends now more than ever, and being a good friend includes stanching the flow of conversations steeped in societally ingrained self-hatred, even if it’s much easier to talk about a few pounds than our current mental state.

This sentiment isn’t unique to Covid-19 times. Last year Quinn Boyle’s op-ed “The Skinniest College in America” was one of the most widely circulated articles in The Campus’ history. This was not only because she brilliantly shed light on the college’s failures around mental health resources but also because

her struggles with disordered eating were far too relatable to far too many people.

This college — and country — has pandemic-level rates of disordered eating. It’s an intrinsic part of our moral code, with people far too casually tying “good” and “bad” to food groups and exercise.

In a time when we are surrounded by genuine evil, why are we pretending that our standards of good and bad are based on how many leaves we consume, and why are we wasting our time applying these fake moral standards to ourselves? Nobody is winning a Nobel Prize for going on a jog, just as nobody is going to a grand jury for having an extra slice of cake.

I recognize that saying “don’t talk about weight” will probably result in a lot more people talking about weight... but if we do have to talk about it, can we at least shift the conversation away from attacking ourselves and onto attacking the culture that has invaded our self-worth?

We do not need to “bottle this all up” — I think we do enough of that on this campus already. But we desperately need to reevaluate our value systems for ourselves and each other before it’s too late. Before we have to pack everything up again and regret missing out on that Flatbread dinner with friends because we equated “healthier” with a salad instead of with a friendship — or regret sleeping through an entire day when we didn’t eat before drinking because we thought that calories counted more than hours on this campus.

This is not to minimize the reality of those struggling with eating disorders here on campus. This semester’s limited food options and strict dining hall hours may be frustrating to some, but they are borderline cataclysmic to others who need control over their meals in order to satisfy the crippling conditions of a mental illness. Eating disorder recovery is slow and nonlinear, and being thrown out of a routine during a larger crisis is terrifying. If you or a friend is struggling with this, please call Midd TeleHealth and/or the National Eating Disorders Crisis Hotline at 800-931-2237.

We have been through a lot this year. Our bodies are surviving a pandemic. Our bodies are sitting in the library taking in information that will help us lead the world out of this mess. Our bodies are hosting dance parties (six feet apart) and holding our friends close (soon). We need our bodies now more than ever, so can we please, please, stop talking about our weight?

*Editor’s Note: Sophie Clark is a member of the class of 2021. This piece was originally published September 24, 2020.*

## WE MUST PROTECT THE TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

HENRY GANEY

We all know this semester will be different from previous ones in almost every way imaginable — online classes, mandatory face masks, constraints on the size of social gatherings and limited, if any, access to the town of Middlebury itself. Even the ways in which we are preparing for this semester are completely new: a new app that tracks possible symptoms, a mandatory 14-day quarantine and packing lighter. I hope that we all feel the same sense of impending responsibility: that we have to make sure this semester remains safe for everyone on campus.

But as a resident of the town of Middlebury, I am deeply concerned about the health and safety of my fellow community members who have expressed well-founded apprehension regarding it. By and large, the townspeople look upon us with trust, respect and gratitude, as we help to support local businesses and keep the town lively. But when we screw up, they are more than aware of that as well. Last fall, before Covid-19 had affected our lives, negligent acts of vandalism and recklessness committed on campus by our peers brought us deserved scrutiny from the local community. Furthermore, unfortunately, one of the last memories town members have of the final days of students on campus is tarnished by those who vandalized Two Brothers’ Tavern and Notte Pizza Bar. This is the opposite of the lasting impression we want to have on a community which welcomes and supports us. We must do better. This is a requirement, not an option.

It is far past time for us to earn back the trust and respect of the local community, and taking the necessary steps to protect the community from Covid-19 is the best way to do just that.

At the time of publication, 1,484 Vermonters have contracted Covid-19 and 58 have died. According to the New York Times, Vermont has the fewest total cases and cases per capita of any U.S. state. Recently, Vermont also became the first and, thus far, the only state where in the time frame of one month — from June 18 to July 30 — not a single person died from the virus (regrettably, two Vermonters have died since July 30). Additionally, there have been zero confirmed cases in the town of Middlebury.

This is what our reality looks like now. If you are returning to the area, please think about these statistics if you have doubts about the seriousness and effectiveness of the reopening plan. If you are thinking about going shopping when you arrive, I urge you to think about the business owners for whom contracting the virus could mean the closure of their store. Consider the professors who will risk their own health and that of their family to come and teach us. There are more of us returning to the area in the coming weeks than Vermont has Covid-19 cases.

Governor Phil Scott has said that the greatest risk facing Vermont is the influx of out-of-state residents coming into the state and disregarding regulations. The town of Middlebury does not have the infrastructure to cope with a massive outbreak that starts on campus. If we want to earn back the trust and respect of the community, it begins with sending an imperative message: your health and safety matter just as much, if not more, than mine. Throughout the past few months, I have been thoroughly impressed by the way this community has responded to the pandemic. We wear masks, we socially distance, we stay in our pods and, most importantly, we respect each other because we know it only takes one of us slipping up for this town to become a hotspot. This here is the mentality all of us must immediately adopt if we are to keep this community safe. When we all move in, by sheer virtue of living here, the health and safety of townspeople and their loved ones will immediately be at risk.

This is the solemn responsibility we find ourselves confronted with this semester. We must do absolutely everything we can to ensure there is not an outbreak. Residents of the town, like my parents and neighbors, had no say in the college’s reopening. When we all move in, by sheer virtue of living here, the health and safety of townspeople and their loved ones will immediately be at risk. Yes, the two-week pre-arrival quarantine is going to be challenging. We all want to see our friends in the remaining time we have, but I am committed to my own quarantine before I move back. Even though I am coming from less than a mile away, I believe as soon as we start making small exceptions to the quarantine, it will put everyone else at risk. Yes, wearing a mask outdoors on campus could seem unnecessary, but it is a small adjustment to make in the long run.

Please think about not just our campus community, but also about the local community who had no say in your return. This semester, we are obliged to protect not just ourselves but the townspeople who, year after year, welcome us into this beautiful place with open arms. Dr. Peluso and President Patton’s leadership team have enough confidence in their plan to bring us back (heck, she’s even teaching her own in-person class), so let’s make sure their faith in us is not unfounded. We have a real opportunity to prove to the community that we are the responsible, diligent, smart and caring people we know we are. We can do this. We must do this.

*Editor’s Note: Henry Ganey ’22 is a resident of Middlebury, Vt. This piece was originally published August 17, 2020.*



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## DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION

OWEN MASON-HILL

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*Direct Your Attention is a culture column by Senior Arts & Culture Editor Owen Mason-Hill '22. Each week, he discusses his favorite media projects he's discovered. These pieces were originally published Nov. 12 and Nov. 19, 2020 respectively.*

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## LUDOVICO EINAUDI'S MOST INTIMATE CONCERT

While Covid-19 wreaked havoc across the world both physically and mentally, stripping some of their loved ones and others of their mental health, I thankfully fell only into the latter category. Despite being spared the full extent of the pandemic's destruction, I did not leave unscathed. In returning home, I found that an incredible paradox arose, one in which I was simultaneously greeted with overwhelming love and inescapable loneliness. After months of seeing the same four faces day in and day out, I found that the repetition only served to push me further into myself. That is, until one day when I was scrolling through Apple Music and happened upon an album with a beautifully simplistic design that demanded my attention. It was a plain off-white canvas with a simple image drawn only from five deliberately imperfect lines and inside, written in a soft handwriting, "12 Songs From Home."

I pressed play and tossed my phone to the other side of my bed, laying down with my eyes closed. I was soon enraptured by a delicate piano melody played directly from the composer's home to mine. Accompanying his deft keystrokes was a light crackle of the recording and muffled sounds of Einaudi breathing. This is not a studio album; it is precisely the opposite. You can hear the soft creaking of footsteps in his home; a light shuffle as he readjusts his seating. The album is designed as an invitation into his life, an intimate human connection I hadn't experienced in weeks.

After putting his European tour on hold because of the pandemic, Einaudi set out to record an album of his own, performing an impromptu concert inside his living room during the height of Italy's lockdown. There was a boom of amateur art being produced during the pandemic, much of it truly wonderful, yet something about the honest intimacy of Einaudi's album has lingered with me long after lockdown ended and I have begun my life anew. That is not to say that "12 Songs From Home" changed my life or cured my mental exhaustion — rather it offered me a form of reprieve I hadn't experienced in some time.

The quiet optimism of Einaudi's music represents the

incredible heartbreak that accompanied recent losses of life and social connection. But it also provides a reserved hopefulness that looks forward as confidently as one could in a time where nothing is certain. "12 Songs from Home" became a part of my daily routine, serving as a constant reminder of the forgone social interaction that I missed so dearly.

Einaudi released an accompanying video of himself playing the song "Nuvole Bianche" from the album. The making of the video is even simpler than that of the album. Seemingly recorded from an iPhone placed on top of his home piano, it shows the aged composer, shot slightly off center, sitting atop a well worn stool, playing a more modest piano than the astounding grands one would see in his usual concert shows. I have never been to a classical concert, nor do I have the faculties to accurately describe the music being played; I only have my own experience of it. I listened to a great deal of music this past spring and summer, and watched a great deal of film and television, yet the modest empathy of this album still rings through my mind far louder than any other.

Perhaps it is the emotional resonance that the album possesses, to have been as timely as it was while seeming to urge its listeners forward toward a better tomorrow, and perhaps it is the sheer intimacy of it that lured me in and gave me something I'd been deprived of. Either way, "12 Songs From Home" provided me with a reserve of what I would consider companionship during the months I needed it most. Listening to this album will not cure you of your mental ails, but it will provide you with another source of hopefulness in your life. In a time where everything was beyond my control, I found it to be a constant from which I could draw my strength. I still listen to it often just before I fall asleep because its quiet presence is enough to drown out the silence. And sometimes that's enough: to quiet the overwhelmingness of silence. I hope you will listen to "12 Songs From Home," and if you do not prefer this kind of music, I hope you have found something else that helps.

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## DAVE CHAPPELLE ISN'T JOKING ANYMORE

It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of comedian Dave Chappelle's imprint on our zeitgeist. Even calling him a comedian feels like the wrong title; perhaps activist or social commentator is more apt. This week, for the second time, Dave Chappelle hosted "Saturday Night Live" immediately after a U.S. presidential election. The first — in 2016 — followed the election of President Donald Trump; the second occurred just a few days ago, after Joe Biden was voted president-elect.

In his opening monologue on Saturday night, Chappelle took on a rather serious tone, donning a well-tailored suit instead of his signature one-of-a-kind, army-surplus-inspired jacket. He began the monologue, cigarette in hand as always, with a remembrance of his great grandfather, who was a slave before being freed. Chappelle remarked that he wished his great grandfather were able to see him at that moment — see a Black man in America who has become successful enough to fly to New York City via private jet to host "Saturday Night Live."

But Chappelle doesn't stop there. He notes that his immensely popular sketch comedy show, "Chappelle's Show," has begun streaming on Netflix and HBO, though without Chappelle receiving any payment. Longtime fans of Chappelle (or those who kept up with early-2000s current events) know that even in success, "Chappelle's Show" did not go off without a hitch. Instead, Chappelle voided his contract and left the show during the production of its third season. In his Netflix special "The Bird Revelation," he likened his relationship with the show's network to one not unlike that of a pimp and his most profitable prostitute. Chappelle finished his musings on a punchline, as always. "[You] were bought and sold more times than I was," Chappelle said, assuming his great grandfather's voice, relaying to the audience that despite his success, Chappelle was still confined by deeply rooted, harmful institutions.

While the joke naturally aroused uproarious laughter from the audience, it was meant to be much more pensive than its reaction would lead one to believe. "I can't even tell something true unless it has a punchline behind it," Chappelle said. It is this constant embattlement that Chappelle seems to face in each of his Netflix specials and his monologues, and even back during his "Chappelle Show" run. If he were to simply outline the enormity of the racism he faces on a daily basis from a political or social standpoint, no one would listen. If he were just a comedian, he would be unable to discuss the issues he feels are most pressing in America. Every time Chappelle walks out onstage and grabs hold of a microphone, he is walking a tightrope. At the beginning is Chappelle, tentatively putting his weight on the wire, eyeing what lies across: an audience and a society that understands the plights he speaks of, understands the inhumane racism that has been systematically oppressing Black people for centuries and understands the social critiques



he speaks of and wishes to enact change. The burden of this thin wire is the comedic sheath Chappelle must veil his commentary in. If he is not funny enough, his audience won't stay long enough to listen, and if it's pure comedy, he fails to reach his goal and educate his audience. "You guys aren't ready," said Chappelle. "You're not ready for this."

It is an interesting affair to watch both of Chappelle's monologues back to back. There is a clear distinction in tone that is influenced directly by the political circumstances of the time. In the first monologue, he is light, funny and cautiously optimistic. He talks of the impending Trump presidency with the same humorous disbelief that most Americans did at that time. He wishes Trump well in the White House and makes light of his infamous Access Hollywood tape through a joke about himself staying in Trump's New York hotel. Referring to the Obama administration, Chappelle remarks how profound it was to have a Black leader who made deliberate efforts to bring to light the very same racial issues about which Chappelle speaks. His optimism is matched by an equally optimistic tone in his newest monologue, though marred with much less levity. Chappelle addresses racial issues with urgency and openly points out the hypocrisy of white-on-Black racism that prevailed in Trump's and earlier presidencies.

Chappelle isn't joking anymore about the seriousness of racism in America, and neither should we. His monologues and stand-ups have tipped the balance to weigh much more heavily in social critique than in pure comedy. His recent special "8:46" built directly upon the surge of Black Lives Matter movements across the country this summer. Chappelle's deftness for the comedy craft is unquestioned and unparalleled, and the timeliness of his critiques are as dire as ever. I implore you to consider his words and listen to his voice with earnest intent. For white people, now is the time for listening; we have been talking for far too long.



# AMERICA'S NORMAL: A TRAGEDY

MAX PADILLA

On Jan. 1, 2020, many of us rang in the new year with booze in one hand and our best friend in the other.

On Jan. 9, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a mysterious coronavirus related to pneumonia. This announcement proved an unassuming start to a devastating year.

On Jan. 21, 2020, the Center for Disease Control confirmed the first Covid-19 case in the U.S.

On Jan. 31 the WHO issued a state of Global health emergency.

On March 11 the WHO officially declared Covid-19 a pandemic.

On March 15, 2020, Breonna Taylor was murdered in her home.

On that same day, California became the first state to issue a stay-at home order.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered in the streets of Minneapolis.

People all over the country took to the streets, enraged by his death. Their peaceful cries were met by tear gas and rubber bullets from unmoved, unsympathetic policemen. Their calls and activism met with empty words by most of the politicians who claimed to represent them.

On June 2, 2020, most of you posted a black square on Instagram for Blackout Tuesday. That may be all that you did — the definition of performative activism. Now due to the circumstances that the world found itself in, posting may have been all you could do.

As the pandemic raged on, rushing to the streets became harder for people to justify. By fall, streets once filled with “BLACK LIVES MATTER” signs and people of all ages and races coming together for equality were empty.

On Dec. 11, 2020 the first Covid-19 vaccines became available. A return to normalcy finally seemed like more than a pipe dream.

Many of us saw this as the first steps towards the old lives we long for. Just over the horizon, we could see masks coming off; bars and restaurants reopening; flights to see our loved ones within reach.

Within many of us, there is probably a knee-jerk reaction to throw aside the year we have just endured and finally enjoy life. But if we have learned anything from 2020, it is that there is much work ahead.

On Dec. 22, 2020, Andre Maurice Hill was murdered in his car by police after a non-emergency 911 call.

On Jan. 6, 2021, the capitol was stormed by an angry, white, racist mob.

Donning shirts with anti-Semitic symbols and attacking the very blue lives they told us mattered more than our own not three weeks prior, these traitors were allowed to saunter into a woefully unprotected Capitol Building.

When I was there on June 5, 2020, the National Guard looked down from the steps of the Capitol Building at a crowd begging for equality. We walked for hours in the blistering heat, putting ourselves and our families at risk because our justice system had made it painfully clear to us that being Black is a crime.

They would not have hesitated to throw us to the ground, force us onto our knees and cuff every last one of us if we made one misstep. Even as I write this, I know that is a painfully optimistic view of what may have happened.

This is the America we live in today.

This is the America that will persist if we fail to take action. If we let our imminent freedom become more important than the lives of a suffering, silenced people. This is America's normal.

I know I must sound like a broken record. But when the travel restrictions are lifted and the bars open once more, do more for the Black Lives Matter movement than a fist emoji in your Instagram bio.

Now that you can go back to work, try to donate what you can to organizations that provide legal aid and support to communities most affected by police brutality. Next time there is a Black Lives Matter protest: go! Walk to your state's capitol, peacefully, and show your legislatures that this is a movement, not momentarily sparked by another tragic death of yet another unarmed Black victim, but an ongoing demand for justice. Get on your phone and call your congressman, your mayor, your local legislatures, and demand justice. Be aware of the legislative decisions being made in your community and do what you can, whatever you can, to make your voice heard.

You're about to gain your freedom back. Do something with it.

*Editor's Note: Max Padilla '22 is a Photo Editor for The Campus.*

## NEW PLACES, OLD FACES

SABINE POUX

I almost rear-ended the car in front of me last week when I saw it on the back window — a “Middlebury Crew” bumper sticker.

You don't see Middlebury memorabilia much here. I live in Kenai, Alaska, a small town three hours south of Anchorage on the world-famous Kenai River. It's known for its salmon fishing, but there's a lot more than fish here — the landscape is also dotted with active volcanoes, scalable mountains and offshore oil rigs. Kenai and its sister city Soldotna are on the road system, which makes them significantly more accessible than other Alaska towns and cities you can only get to on a plane or ferry.

It's an incredible place for a journalist. Alaska is the size of almost 70 Vermonts but has just 100,000 more people than the Green Mountain state. There are debates over natural resources that play out in real time, both on the Kenai Peninsula, where I live, and in the state at large. Many of the people who homesteaded on the peninsula in the 1950s and 60s, back before it was a state, still live here. Their family names are on street signs.

Just a few months in, I'm subsumed by this place. That's partly because I'm a reporter, so I have professional permission to meet as many people as I can and ask them nosy questions.

But I imagine anyone who's moved far away from home knows what it feels like to shift the center of their universe — for me, from New York to Vermont to Alaska.

That's not to say my life here is dissociated from my past lives. I'm starting to realize it really isn't. Home is part and parcel of everything I do.

I started my job search in Alaska because a Middlebury friend, Hunter Graham '20, clued me in to a journalism job opening in Skagway, where her grandmother lives. One of my closest friends on the peninsula is a mutual friend of Professor Sue Halpern — she introduced us virtually when I got up here.

Last week, I had dinner with a Middlebury alumnus who's been here for almost 30 years. He lives in rural Alaska and races sled dogs but he also knows what the inside of Mead Chapel looks like. The world is so delightfully small sometimes.

There's also, of course, that bumper sticker. I'm still trying to trace it back to its owner.

Perhaps the biggest throughline between then and now is the pandemic. I'll never forget those early days of covering the virus as it barreled toward Vermont. My clearest memory from March 10, strangely, isn't getting official word from the school but getting a call from editor Ben Glass '20.5, who was at BevCo — seniors were scrambling to buy all the Keystone they could carry, he said, before they were kicked off campus indefinitely. It was a lesson in how college students react when they hear the apocalypse is coming for them.

I'm still covering that pandemic. The tenor of coverage has changed, but I still think about the conversations we had as a Campus team when I'm writing stories of my own here, over 4,500 miles away.

The newness of life here is bespeckled with fragments of familiarity. And time has seldom seemed linear these last 12 months. Not to mention we're not fully graduated yet — an in-person commencement is still a promise for the nebulous post-Covid future. I think a few more classes will be joining in our post-hoc commencement than we anticipated last March (sorry, '20.5 and '21).

Maybe we'll even finally get our Gamaliel Painter Canes. I'm not confident mine will fit in an overhead bin. But it might make for good closure.

*Editor's Note: Sabine Poux '20 was the 2019-2020 Editor in Chief of The Campus.*







## WHAT HAPPENS NOW

Unprecedented. Challenging. Uncertain.

These words have become staples of the past year — so prominent and ubiquitous that they have almost lost their meaning. But, in truth, this year has been all of those things.

Some of us continue to grapple with the lasting pain of losing a loved one. Others are mourning the disappearance of the small things that color our days — impromptu visits, warm embraces and shared meals. Some have said goodbye to their families and left their homes for an indefinite amount of time; others are still separated from their loved ones and unable to return. For some, the pandemic has laid bare the structural inequities that engender violence and marginalization; for others, these injustices were — and continue to be — inseparable from their lived experience.

But for the first time, it feels as if an end to the pandemic is perhaps in sight. Covid-19 cases have finally started to decline, and the latest vaccine news predicts that most Americans will have access this spring. Many of us wonder if next fall will be a semester like the ones we remember from before.

As we approach what seems to be the light at the end of the tunnel, we should also remember some of the other words that rose to prominence in the past year: change, commitment and justice. These words remind us of the collective actions we took to keep each other safe and our dedication to building kinder, more equitable communities.

As we venture into our “new normal,” let’s not leave them behind.

  
**BOCHU DING**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF





